

The Giver
A Play in Three Acts

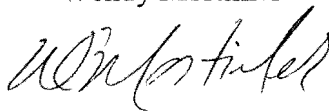
Adapted from the Novel by Lois Lowry

An Honors Thesis (HNRS 499)

By

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendy Mortimer", written in a cursive style.

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

April 2008

Expected Graduation—May 3, 2008

Abstract

For my senior honors thesis, I set out to adapt Lois Lowry's 1992 youth science-fiction novel *The Giver* for the stage. As a theatre major, I've spent much of my time at Ball State analyzing plays and studying how stories are told— on stage, on screen, and on paper. Some of my favorite plays and films have been adapted from books and I have always been interested in the process of how playwrights and screenwriters decide what aspects of an original text to keep, to change, or to omit altogether.

To me, theatre is about the exploration of what it means to be human— sharing an experience with others and seeking solace that you are not alone in the world. *The Giver* deals with these issues. The protagonist, a young boy named Jonas, has grown up in a cold industrial society and through the power of memory learns about a time in the past that there was warmth and love everywhere. With his newfound wisdom, he is inspired to take control of his life and escape the emptiness of his world.

With the United States government pushing for the Real ID Act to provide security to its citizens, the No Child Left Behind Act and its affects on fine arts education programs in schools, and the ongoing war in Iraq, our nation is facing some of the same issues raised in Lowry's 1992 novel. Just how much freedom are we willing to give up for the sake of security? How much control should a governing force exert to protect its citizens? What do we lose when we begin genetically engineering our children or replace expressive arts with more "practical" alternatives? Are we ever truly safe and what are the consequences of that safety? And is it really possible, in the face of adversity, for one person to truly change the world?

Acknowledgements

I would like to take a moment to thank...

-**Wendy Mortimer** for serving as my advisor throughout this process, for encouraging me as an emerging playwright, for helping to calm my nerves on the days I felt overwhelmed, and for always reminding me that life is a process and to enjoy it one step at a time.

-**Jen Blackmer** for helping me with the early drafts of the play and offering exciting ideas about how to tell the story in a more creative fashion.

-**Yvonne Bond, Ryan Ehresman, Andrew Kramer, Kate Martin, Carlie Mayo, and Kyle McKanna**, for their participation in a reading of the work on April 17, 2008. With their assistance, I was able to hear my play read aloud for the first time and gather excellent feedback before making final adjustments to the script.

-**Francine Wagner**, my second grade teacher, for nurturing my love of books at a young age, teaching me to always challenge myself, and for first introducing me to *The Giver* over fifteen years ago.

Characters

The Family Unit:

MOTHER

FATHER

JONAS, 12

LILY, 7

GABRIEL, infant

Jonas' Friends:

ASHER, 12

FIONA, 12

Other Community Members:

INSTRUCTOR, Jonas' teacher

LARISSA, resident at House of the Old

ATTENDANT, the Annex and House of the Old

THE SPEAKER, omnipotent and unseen

CHIEF ELDER, leader of Community

THE GIVER, ageless

Scene 1

(NOTE: As per the fact that music does not exist in this community, there is to be no pre-show music. An industrial soundscape may be used in its place. Bicycles, pedestrians, children playing, distant trains and transportation busses and trucks. And very often, announcements made by the SPEAKER are heard loud and clear throughout the community. Every room of every building has a speaker mounted on the wall that is permanently switched on. There are numerous speakers outdoors as well, as frequent as street lights. Announcements ring through all speakers simultaneously, guaranteeing all members of the community can hear what is being said.)

It is December in a nameless utopian community that promotes and thrives on the idea of Sameness. All members of the community are treated the same; any differences (positive or negative) are to be ignored, for fear of invoking Rudeness.

It is early morning, children are on their way to school, adults on their way to work. Everyone either walks or rides bicycles. In some instances, a small child may be riding in the seat attached to a parent's bicycle. Children under the age of Nine do not possess their own bicycles. This particular morning is no different than any other and all members of the community are set in their routine. There is a quiet calm on the street, as people feel safe and secure in their world.

A Plane roars past overhead. Its shadow darkens the stage. The community looks up, anxious and frozen in their tracks. It is against the Rules for pilots to fly over the community. They wait for an explanation and instructions. Finally, one comes.

SPEAKER. Immediately. Leave your bicycles where they are.

JONAS, a cautious, studious boy of Eleven obediently follows the SPEAKER'S instructions, drops his bike, runs into his family's dwelling, and peers out the front window. The rest of the community does the same and almost instantly, the street becomes deserted. Some are peering out of windows others have disappeared from sight altogether.

SPEAKER. *(Reassuring and urgent)* A Pilot-in-Training has misread his Navigational Instructions and made a wrong turn. The Pilot had been desperately trying to make his way back before his error was noticed. *(Ironically, as if the SPEAKER finds this all amusing.)* Needless to say, he will be released.

After several moments of silence and stillness, the members of the community begin to gather their bicycles and continue on their way to work and school. JONAS apprehensively mounts his bike and arrives at school. He enters the classroom just in time. Moments after the bell, ASHER, JONAS' best friend, runs in out-of-breath but smiling.

ASHER. I apologize for inconveniencing my learning community. I left home at the correct time but when I was riding along near the hatchery, the crew was separating some salmon. I guess I just got distraught, watching them. I apologize to my classmates.

STUDENTS. We accept your apology, Asher.

INSTRUCTOR. I accept your apology, Asher. And I thank you, because once again you have provided an opportunity for a lesson in language. 'Distraught' is too strong an adjective to describe salmon-viewing.

(The INSTRUCTOR turns to the board and writes the word "distracted")

INSTRUCTOR. Now, who can tell me the differences between these two words? What are some synonyms for Distraught? Fiona?

FIONA. Hysterical. Flustered. Agitated.

INSTRUCTOR. Right. And what about Distracted?

FIONA. Unfocused or sidetracked.

INSTRUCTOR. Very good. Now Asher, do you understand why the word Distraught was inappropriate?

ASHER. Yes, Instructor. Thank you for taking the time to improve my precision of language.

The midday meal bell rings and the students head toward the recreation area where JONAS picks up an apple and casually begins a game of catch with ASHER. Mid-air, the apple momentarily turns red and then returns to its previous nondescript shade

of gray. JONAS looks stunned. ASHER doesn't notice. They continue to toss the apple back and fourth. It turns red each time. JONAS looks around; he is the only one who sees the change.

JONAS. Ash, does anything seem strange to you?
About the apple?

ASHER. Yes, it jumps out of my hand onto the ground!

ASHER laughs as JONAS unsuccessfully tries to shake the uneasy feeling that something had happened to the apple. The bell rings and the STUDENTS start to move inside. After making sure no one is looking, JONAS slips the apple into his pocket. Almost immediately:

SPEAKER. This is a reminder to Male Elevens that objects are not to be removed from the Recreation Area and that snacks are to be eaten, not hoarded.

The STUDENTS all look at JONAS and try to hide their snickers. JONAS returns the apple to the basket and catches up with his groupmates on their way inside, still mystified.

Scene 2

All members of the community eat their meals at the same time. Through lit windows we see families gather around their individual tables and sit down simultaneously. JONAS, MOTHER, and FATHER sit around the dinner table. LILY, JONAS' seven-

year-old sister, is fussing over an infant in a baby carrier.

JONAS. What gender is it?

FATHER. Male. He's a sweet little male with a lovely disposition. But he isn't growing as fast as he should, and he doesn't sleep soundly. We have him in the extra care section for supplementary nurturing, but the committee's beginning to talk about releasing him.

MOTHER. Oh, no. I know how sad that must make you feel.

FATHER. Well, I'm going to keep trying. I may ask the committee for permission to bring him here each night, if you don't mind. You know what the night-crew Nurturers are like. I think this little guy needs something extra.

MOTHER. Of course.

LILY. Maybe we could even keep him.

MOTHER. Lily, you know the rules.

LILY. Well, I thought maybe just this once. Oh, look! Isn't he cute? Look how tiny he is! And he has funny eyes like yours, Jonas! (*JONAS glares at her*) Maybe he had the same birthmother as you. What's his comfort object called?

FATHER. Hippo.

LILY. I think newchildren are so cute. I hope I get assigned to be a birthmother.

MOTHER. Lily! Don't say that. There's very little honor in that Assignment.

FATHER. Anyway, Lily-Billy, the birthmothers never even get to see newchildren. If you enjoy the

little ones so much, you should hope for an Assignment as Nurturer.

MOTHER. When you're an Eight and start your volunteer hours, you can try some at the Nurturing Center.

LILY. Yes, I think I will. Oops! I think he's asleep. I guess I'd better be quiet.

(SHE joins the rest of the family at the table.)

FATHER. Who wants to be first tonight, for feelings? You go, Lily.

LILY. I felt very angry this afternoon. My Childcare Group was at the play area, and we had a visiting group of sevens. They didn't obey the rules at all! One of them—a male; I don't know his name—kept going right to the front of the line for the slide, even though the rest of us were all waiting. I felt so angry at him. I made my hand into a fist, like this.

MOTHER. Why do you think the visitors didn't obey the rules?

LILY. I don't know. They acted like...like...

JONAS. Animals?

LILY. That's right, like animals (*THEY laugh at the nonsensical word*).

FATHER. Where were the visitors from?

LILY. Our leader told us, when he made the welcome speech, but I can't remember. I guess I wasn't paying much attention. It was from another community. They had to leave very early, and they had their midday meal on the bus.

MOTHER. Do you think it's possible that their rules may be different? And so they simply didn't know what your play area rules were?

LILY. I suppose.

JONAS. You've visited other communities, haven't you? My group has.

LILY. When we were Sixes, we went and shared a whole school day with a group of Sixes in their community. It felt strange because their methods were different, so we felt stupid.

FATHER. I'm thinking about the boy who didn't obey the rules today. Do you think it's possible that he felt strange and stupid, being in a new place with rules that he didn't know about?

LILY. Yes

JONAS. I feel a little sorry for him. I feel sorry for anyone who is in a place where he feels strange and stupid.

FATHER. How do you feel now, Lily? Still angry?

LILY. I guess not. I guess I feel a little sorry for him. And sorry I made a fist.

FATHER. Jonas, you're next.

JONAS. I'm feeling apprehensive.

FATHER. Why is that, son?

JONAS. I know there's really nothing to worry about, and that every adult has been through it. I know you have, Father, and you too, Mother. But it's the Ceremony that I'm apprehensive about. It's almost December.

LILY. The Ceremony of Twelve.

FATHER. I'm glad you told us your feelings.

MOTHER. Lily, go on now and get into your nightclothes. Father and I are going to stay here and talk to Jonas for a while.

LILY. Privately?

MOTHER. Yes, this talk will be a private one with Jonas. (*LILY sighs and leaves the room.*)

FATHER. You know, every December was exciting to me when I was young. And it has been for you and Lily, too, I'm sure. Each December brings such changes.

JONAS. I enjoy the Naming.

MOTHER. The year we got Lily, we knew of course that we'd receive our female, because we'd made our application and been approved. But I'd been wondering and wondering what her name would be.

FATHER. I could have sneaked a look at the list prior to the ceremony. The committee always makes the list in advance, and it's right there in the office at the Nurturing Center. As a matter of fact, I feel a little guilty about this. But I did go in this afternoon and looked to see if this year's Naming list had been made yet. It was right there in the office, and I looked up number Thirty-six—that's this little guy I've been concerned about—because it occurred to me that it might just enhance his nurturing if I could call him by a name. Just privately, of course, when no one else is around.

JONAS. Did you find it?

FATHER. His name, if he makes it to the Naming without being released, of course—is Gabriel. So I whisper that to him when I feed him every four hours, and during exercise and playtime. If no one

can hear me. I call him Gabe, actually. (*beat*) When I was eleven, as you are, Jonas, I was very impatient, waiting for the Ceremony of Twelve. I remember that I enjoyed the Ones, as I always do, but that I didn't pay much attention to the other ceremonies. I watched and cheered when my sister, Katya, became a Nine and removed her hair ribbons and got her bicycle. I'd been teaching her to ride mine, even though technically I wasn't supposed to. Then I didn't pay much attention to the Tens and Elevens. Finally, at the end of the day, which seemed to go on forever, it was my turn. I remember how proud my parents looked—and my sister, too; even though she wanted to be out riding the bicycle publicly. But to be honest, Jonas, for me there was not the element of suspense because I was already fairly certain of what my Assignment would be.

MOTHER. How could you have known?

FATHER. Well, it was clear to me—and my parents had later confessed that it had been obvious to them, too—what my aptitude was. I had always loved the newchildren more than anything. When my friends in my age group were holding bicycle races, or building toy vehicles or bridges with their construction sets, or—

JONAS. All the things I do with my friends.

FATHER. I always participated of course, because as children we must experience all of those things. But again and again, during free time, I found myself drawn to the newchildren. I spent almost all of my volunteer hours helping in the Nurturing Center. Of course, the Elders knew that from their observation. So I expected it, and I was pleased, but

not at all surprised, when my Assignment was announced as Nurturer.

JONAS. Did everyone applaud even though they weren't surprised?

FATHER. Oh, of course. They were happy for me, that my Assignment was what I wanted most. I felt very fortunate.

JONAS. Were any Elevens disappointed your year?

FATHER. No, I don't think so. Of course, the Elders are so careful in their observations and selections.

MOTHER. I think it's probably the most important job in the community.

FATHER. There are very rarely disappointments, Jonas. I don't think you need to worry about that. And if you are, you know there's an appeal process.

JONAS. I worry a little about Asher's Assignment. Asher's such fun. But he doesn't really have any serious interests. He makes a game out of everything.

FATHER. You know, I remember when Asher was a newchild at the Nurturing Center. He never cried. He giggled and laughed at everything. All of us on the staff enjoyed nurturing Asher.

MOTHER. The Elders know Asher. I don't think you need to worry about him. But Jonas, let me warn you about something that may not have occurred to you. I know I didn't think about it until after my Ceremony of Twelve.

JONAS. What's that?

MOTHER. Well, it's the last of the Ceremonies, as you know. After Twelve, age isn't important. Most of us even lost track of how old we are as time

passes, though the information is in the Hall of Open Records, and we could go and look it up if we wanted to. What's important is the preparation for adult life, and the training you'll receive in your Assignment.

JONAS. I know that. Everyone knows that.

MOTHER. But it means that you'll move into a new group. And each of your friends will. You'll no longer be spending your time with your group of Elevens. After the Ceremony, you'll be with your Assignment group, with those in training. No more recreation hours. So your friends will no longer be as close.

JONAS. Asher and I will always be friends. And there will still be school.

FATHER. That's true, but what your mother said is true as well. There will be changes.

MOTHER. Good changes, though. After my Ceremony of Twelve, I missed my childhood recreation, but when I entered my training for Law and Justice, I found myself with people who shared my interests. I made friends on a new level, friends of all ages.

JONAS. Did you still play at all, after Twelve?

MOTHER. Occasionally. But it didn't seem as important to me.

FATHER. I did. I still do. Every day at the Nurturing Center, I play bounce-on-the-knee, and peek-a-boo, and hug-the-teddy. Fun doesn't end when you become a Twelve.

(LILY appears in the doorway)

LILY. This is certainly a very long private conversation. And there are certain people waiting for their comfort objects.

MOTHER. Lily, you're very close to becoming an Eight, and when you're an Eight, your comfort object will be recycled to the younger children. You should be starting to go off to sleep without it.

FATHER. (*Handing her the stuffed elephant off a shelf*) Here you are, Lily-Billy. I'll come help you remove your hair ribbons.

Scene 3

The House of the Old. The Following Afternoon. JONAS is completing the required volunteer hours.

ATTENDANT. Hello, Jonas. It's good to have some volunteers here today. We celebrated a release this morning and that always throws the schedule off a little, so things get backed up. Let's see, Asher and Fiona are helping in the bathing room. Why don't you join them there? You know where it is, don't you?

(JONAS nods and walks past the ATTENDANT into the bathing room where ASHER is bathing an old man in a tub of water. On the other side of the room, FIONA folds towels and converses quietly with the Old who are waiting to be bathed)

ASHER. Hi, Jonas.

(HE gestures in the direction of an old woman in a bath robe patiently waiting for her turn to be bathed. JONAS steps up to an empty tub and turns on the water.)

JONAS. Your turn, Larissa. I'm just starting the water and then help you up. (*Helping her stand and climb into the tub*) Comfortable?

(She smiles but doesn't say anything. After a moment, she speaks.)

LARISSA. This morning we celebrated the release of Roberto. It was wonderful.

JONAS. I knew Roberto! I helped with his feeding the last time I was here, just a few weeks ago. He was a very interesting man.

LARISSA. They told his whole life before they released him, they always do. But to be honest, some of the tellings are a little boring. I've even seen some of the Old fall asleep during tellings—when they released Edna recently. Did you know Edna? Well, they tried to make her life sound meaningful. And of course, all lives are meaningful, I don't mean that they aren't. But Edna? My goodness. She was a Birthmother, and then she worked in Food Production for years, until she came here. She never even had a family unit. I don't think Edna was very smart. But Roberto's life was wonderful. He had been an Instructor of Elevens—you know how important that is—and he'd been on the Planning Committee. And—goodness, I don't know how he found the time—he also raised two

wouldn't. She kept laughing and saying no. That's all.

FATHER. Can you describe the strongest feeling in your dream, son?

JONAS. The wanting. I knew that she wouldn't. And I think I knew that she shouldn't. But I wanted it so terribly. I could feel the wanting all through me.

MOTHER. Thank you for your dream, Jonas.

FATHER. Lily, it's time to leave for school. Would you like to walk beside me this morning and keep an eye on the newchild's basket? We want to be certain he doesn't wiggle himself loose.

MOTHER. Wait, Jonas. I'll write an apology to you instructor so that you won't have to speak one for being late. Jonas, the feeling you described as the wanting? It was your first Stirrings. Father and I have been expecting it to happen to you. It happens to everyone. It happened to Father when he was your age. And it happened to me. It will someday happen to Lily. And very often, it begins with a dream.

JONAS. Do I have to report it?

MOTHER. You did, in the dream-telling. That's enough.

JONAS. But what about the treatment? The Speaker says that treatment must take place.

MOTHER. No, no. It's just the pills. You're ready for the pills, that's all. That's the treatment for Stirrings.

JONAS. That's all?

MOTHER. That's all. But you mustn't forget. I'll remind you for the first weeks, but then you must do it on your own. If you forget, the dreams of

Stirrings will come back. Sometimes the dosage must be adjusted.

JONAS. Asher takes them.

MOTHER. Many of your groupmates probably do. The males, at least. And they all will soon. Females, too.

JONAS. How long will I have to take them?

MOTHER. Until you enter the House of the Old. All of your adult life. But it becomes routine; after a while you won't even pay much attention to it. If you leave right now, you won't even be late for school. Hurry along. And thank you again, Jonas, for your dream.

Scene 5

The morning of the Ceremony. MOTHER is futilely attempting to adjust LILY's hair ribbons. LILY squirms and tries to pull away.

MOTHER. Lily, please hold still.

LILY. I can tie them myself, I always have.

MOTHER. I know that. But I also know that they constantly come loose and more often than not, they're dangling down your back by afternoon. Today, at least, we want them to be neatly tied and to stay neatly tied.

LILY. I don't like hair ribbons. I'm glad I only have to wear them one more year. Next year I get my bicycle, too.

JONAS. There are good things each year. This year you get to start your volunteer hours. And

remember last year, when you became a Seven, you were so happy to get your front-buttoned jacket?

LILY. And this year you'll get your Assignment. I hope you get Pilot. And that you take me flying!

JONAS. Sure I will. And I'll get a special little parachute that just fits you, and I'll take you up to, oh, maybe twenty thousand feet, and open the door, and—

MOTHER. Jonas!

JONAS. I was only joking. I don't want Pilot, anyway. If I get pilot I'll put in an appeal.

MOTHER. Come on, Jonas? Are you ready? Did you take your pill? I want to get a good seat in the Auditorium.

The family leaves their dwelling and approaches the group of people gathering in front of the Auditorium. JONAS sees ASHER and FIONA in the crowd, talking to some of their GROUPMATES. JONAS joins the conversation towards the end of ASHER's story.

ASHER. ...I heard about a guy who was absolutely certain he was going to be an Engineer, and instead they gave him Sanitation Laborer. He went out the next day, jumped into the river, swam across, and joined the next community he came to. Nobody ever saw him again.

JONAS. Somebody made that story up, Ash. My father said he heard that story when he was a Twelve.

ASHER. I can't even swim very well. My swimming instructor said that I don't have the right boyishness or something.

JONAS. Buoyancy.

ASHER. Whatever, I don't have it. I sink.

FIONA. Anyway, have you ever once known of anyone—I mean really known for sure, Asher, not just heard a story about it—who joined another community?

ASHER. No. But you can. It says so in the rules. If you don't fit in, you can apply for Elsewhere and be released. My mother says that once, about ten years ago, someone applied and was gone the next day. She told me that because I was driving her crazy. She threatened to apply for Elsewhere.

JONAS. She was joking.

ASHER. I know. But it was true, what she said, that someone did that once. She said that it was really true. Here today, gone tomorrow. Never seen again. Not even a Ceremony of Release.

(As HE says this, the Auditorium doors open and people start to head inside. JONAS takes a deep breath and follows the crowd.)

Scene 6

The CHIEF ELDER stands behind a podium as the COMMUNITY files in and finds their seats. Groupmates sit in their assigned order in the front of the auditorium, families towards the back. Once everyone is settled, the CHIEF ELDER clears her throat and addresses the crowd.

CHIEF ELDER. This is the time when we acknowledge our differences. You Elevens have spent all your years till now learning to fit in, to standardize your behavior, to curb any impulse that might set you apart from the group. But today we honor your differences. They have determined your futures. But before presenting the assignments, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to my Committee who has worked hard to meticulously observe each of you all year.

The Committee of Elders stand graciously as the crowd applauds.

As the CHIEF ELDER announces the Assignment, each new TWELVE approaches the podium to receive a badge and a folder of Instructions.

CHIEF ELDER. All of us in the community know and enjoy Asher. When the committee began to consider Asher's Assignment, there were some possibilities that were immediately discarded. Some that would clearly not have been right for Asher. For example, we did not consider for an instant designating Asher an Instructor of Threes, who (as you all know) is in charge of the acquisition of correct language. In fact, we even gave a little thought to some retroactive chastisement for the one who had been Asher's Instructor of Threes so long ago. At the meeting where Asher was discussed, we retold many of the stories that we all remembered from his days of language acquisition. Especially,

the difference between asking for a snack and smack. Remember, Asher? But he learned. And now his lapses are very few. His corrections and apologies are very prompt. And his good humor is unfailing. Asher, we have given you the Assignment of Assistant Director of Recreation. Asher, thank you for your childhood.

(Asher accepts his badge and returns to his seat.)

CHIEF ELDER. Madeline has spent many of her volunteer hours developing her obvious interest in the important process of providing nourishment for the community. She has been Assigned Fish Hatchery Attendant.

While JONAS waits for his own name to be called, time seems to pass more and more quickly with each Assignment given as the tension builds.

CHIEF ELDER. Fiona's calm gentle persona is perfect for her Assignment of Caretaker of the Old.

JONAS is next. As he prepares to make his way towards the stage he hears—

CHIEF ELDER. Pierre, doctor. *(A hush falls over the crowd as they realize HE was skipped. The CHIEF ELDER doesn't acknowledge anything out of the ordinary. JONAS feels caught in a whirlwind.)* Inger, birthmother. Isaac, Instructor of Sixes. Benjamin, engineer. Katya, gardening crew. Natasha, swimming instructor. Harriet, sanitation

laborer. Bruno, security guard. Fritz, rehabilitation director.

JONAS frantically looks around for an explanation. With each new TWELVE called to the podium, JONAS believes he will be the next. As HE looks around the room, HE notices that the crowd changes, but only for a moment. Just like the apple, the faces of JONAS' family and friends take on a strange quality and then quickly return to normal. The other children in his group begin to stare at JONAS. Once the last Assignment is made, the CHIEF ELDER explains.

CHIEF ELDER. I know that you are all concerned. That you feel I have made a mistake. I have caused you anxiety, I apologize to my community.

ALL. We accept your apology

CHIEF ELDER. Jonas, I apologize to you in particular. I caused you anguish.

JONAS. I accept your apology.

CHIEF ELDER. Please come to the stage now.

Jonas has not been assigned. Jonas has been selected. Jonas, you have been selected to be our next Receiver of Memory. Such a selection is very, very rare. Our community has only one Receiver. It is he who trains his successor. We have had our current Receiver for a very long time. We failed in our last selection. It was ten years ago, when Jonas was just a toddler. I will not dwell on the experience because it causes us all terrible discomfort. We have not been hasty this time. We could not afford another failure. Sometimes, we are not totally

certain about Assignments, even after the most painstaking observations. Sometimes we worry that the one assigned might not develop every attribute necessary. Elevens are still children, after all. What we observe as playfulness and patience—the requirements to become a Nurturer—could, with maturity, be revealed as simply foolishness and idleness. So we continue to observe during training, and to modify behavior when necessary. But the Receiver-in-Training cannot be observed, cannot be modified. That is stated quite clearly in the rules. He has to be alone, apart, while he is prepared by the current Receiver for the job which is the most honored in the community. Therefore, the selection must be sound. It must be a unanimous choice of the Committee. If, during the process, an Elder reports a dream of uncertainty, that dream has the power to set a candidate aside instantly. Jonas was identified as a possible Receiver many years ago. There have been no dreams of uncertainty. He has shown all of the qualities that a Receiver must have. Intelligence. Integrity. Courage. Only one of us here today has ever undergone the rigorous training required of a Receiver. He, of course, is the most important member of the Committee: the current Receiver. It was he who reminded us, again and again, of the courage required. Jonas, the training required of you involves pain. Physical pain. You have never experienced that. Yes, you have scraped your knees in falls from your bicycle. But you will be faced now with pain of a magnitude that none of us here can comprehend because it is beyond our experience. The Receiver himself was not able to

describe it, only to remind us that you would be faced with it. We cannot prepare you for that. But we feel certain that you are brave. The fourth essential attribute is Wisdom. Jonas has not yet acquired that. The acquisition of wisdom will come through his training. Finally, the Receiver must have one more quality, and it is one that I can only name, but not describe. I do not understand it. You members of the community will not understand it, either. Perhaps Jonas will, because the current Receiver has told us that Jonas already has this quality. He calls it the Capacity to See Beyond.

JONAS. I think it's true. I don't understand it yet. I don't know what it is. But sometimes I see something. And maybe it's beyond.

CHIEF ELDER. Jonas, you will be trained to be our next Receiver of Memory. We thank you for your childhood.

Scene 7

Immediately following the Ceremony. The crowds are thinning as people make their way home. People stop to stare at JONAS and he begins to sense the weight of his Assignment. JONAS and ASHER collect their bicycles from the bike ports.

JONAS. Ash! Ride back with me?

ASHER. Sure. Congratulations.

(Did ASHER hesitate? Perhaps JONAS only imagined it.)

JONAS. You too. It was really funny, when she told about the smacks. You got more applause than almost anybody else.

FIONA. Congratulations Asher! You too, Jonas. I can't wait to study my instructions and start memorizing the rules before Training begins. I was hoping I'd get Caretaker!

JONAS. Congratulations. See you in the morning, Recreation Director!

ASHER. Right! See you!

(Again, there is a moment of uncertainty. As though things aren't quite the same anymore.)

JONAS arrives at his dwelling, where his family has already sat down for their evening meal, HE quickly joins them and MOTHER hands JONAS his pill. HE swallows it.

LILY. I think I'm going to start my volunteer hours at the Nurturing Center. Since I'm already an expert at feeding Gabriel. *(FATHER shoots her a warning glance.)* I know. I won't mention his name. I know I'm not supposed to know his name.

JONAS. I can.

MOTHER. You've been greatly honored. Your father and I are very proud. It's the most important job in the community.

JONAS. But just the other night you said that the job of making Assignments was the most important!

MOTHER. This is different. It's not a job, really. I never thought, never expected—there's only one Receiver.

JONAS. But the Chief Elder said that they had made a selection before, and that it failed. What was she talking about?

FATHER. It was very much as it was today, Jonas—the same suspense, as one Eleven had been passed over when the Assignments were given. Then the announcement, when they singled out the one—

JONAS. What was his name?

MOTHER. Her, not his. It was a female. But we are never to speak the name, or to use it again for a newchild. The highest degree of disgrace.

JONAS. What happened to her?

FATHER. We don't know. We never saw her again.

MOTHER. You've been greatly honored, Jonas. Greatly honored.

MOTHER and FATHER clear the table, setting the Meal Trays outside for the Collection Crew to pick up later. JONAS retreats to his bedroom where he looks at his folder— empty except for a single sheet of paper. He reads aloud:

JONAS. One. Go immediately at the end of school hours each day to the Annex entrance behind the House of the Old and present yourself to the Attendant. Two. Go immediately to your dwelling at the conclusion of Training Hours each day. Three. From this moment you are exempt from rules governing Rudeness. You may ask any question of any citizen and you will receive answers. Four. Do not discuss your training with any other members of the community, including parents and Elders. Five.

From this moment on, you are prohibited from dream-telling. Six. Except for illness or injury unrelated to your training, do not apply for any medication. Seven. You are not permitted to apply for release. Eight. You may lie.

JONAS, so accustomed to the polite courteousness of the Community, stares at his instructions stunned at being presented the freedom to be rude and to lie.

Scene 8

Outside the House of the Old.

FIONA. I go in here, Jonas. I don't know why I'm so nervous, I've been here so often before.

JONAS. Well, everything's different now.

FIONA. I don't want to be late. If we finish at the same time, I'll ride home with you.

As she turns to leave, JONAS notices something strange about FIONA'S hair. Just like the apple did, her hair takes on a strange inexplicable quality, then returns to normal. Unaware, FIONA disappears into the House of the Old and Jonas watches her, perplexed. After a moment, he wanders around the back to find the entrance to the Annex. He reaches for the door's handle, finds it locked, and notices a buzzer on the door.

VOICE. Yes?

JONAS. It's, uh, Jonas, I'm the new—I mean—

VOICE. Come in.

The door unlocks and JONAS enters into the small lobby.

ATTENDANT. Welcome, Receiver of Memory.

JONAS. Oh, please call me Jonas.

ATTENDANT. You may go right on in. The locks are simply to insure the Receiver's privacy because he needs concentration. It would be difficult if citizens wandered in, looking for the Department of Bicycle Repair, or something.

SHE chuckles at her own joke. JONAS stares at her blankly.

ATTENDANT. Don't worry. There is nothing dangerous here. But, he doesn't like to be kept waiting.

JONAS hurries though the door and finds himself in a furnished living area. The furniture was similar enough to his own family's dwelling; a bed, a table, chairs, a desk. But the pieces in this room seem different. They are not only functional, but also comfortable and inviting. The biggest difference is the bookcase. JONAS' dwelling, like all dwellings in the Community, has only three books: The Book of Rules, a Community Volume (descriptions of every office, building, factory and committee), and a Dictionary. In this room, the walls are covered by filled bookcases. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of books.

JONAS finally notices the old man sitting in a chair, watching him silently. JONAS recognizes him as one of the ELDERS from the Ceremony.

JONAS. I'm Jonas.

GIVER. I know. Welcome, Receiver of Memory.

JONAS. Sir, I apologize for my lack of understanding... *(HE pauses, waiting for a accepting-of-apology response that never comes, then continues)* but I thought—I mean I think, that you are the Receiver of Memory. I'm only, well, I was only assigned, I mean selected, yesterday. I'm not anything at all. Not yet.

GIVER. Beginning today, this moment, at least to me, you are the Receiver. I have been the Receiver for a long time. A very, very long time. You can see that, can't you?

JONAS. *(with respect)* I can see that you are very old.

GIVER. I am not, actually, as old as I look. This job has aged me. I know I look as if I should be scheduled for release very soon. But I actually have a good deal of time left. I was pleased though, when you were selected. It took them a long time. The failure of the previous selection was ten years ago, and my energy is starting to diminish. I need what strength I have remaining for your training. We have hard and painful work to do, you and I. Please sit down. When I became a Twelve, I was selected, as you were. The previous Receiver seemed just as old to me as I do to you. He was just as tired as I am today. You may ask questions. I have so little

experience in describing this process seeing as how it is forbidden to talk of it.

JONAS. I know, sir. I have read the instructions.

GIVER. So I may neglect to make things as clear as I should. My job is important and has enormous honor. But that does not mean that I am perfect, and when I tried before to train a successor, I failed.

Please ask any questions that will help you. Simply stated, although it's not really simple at all, my job is to transmit to you all the memories I have within me. Memories of the past—

JONAS. Sir, I would be very interested to hear the story of your life, and to listen to your memories. (*quickly*) I apologize for interrupting.

GIVER. No apologies in this room. We haven't time.

JONAS. Well, I am really interested; I don't mean that I'm not. But I don't exactly understand why it's so important. I could do some adult job in the community, and in my recreation time I could come listen to the stories from your childhood. I'd like that. Actually, I've done that already, in the House of the Old. It's always fun to listen.

GIVER. No, no. I'm not being clear. It's not my past, not my childhood that I must transmit to you. It's the memories of the whole world. Before you, before me, before the previous Receiver, and generations before him.

JONAS. The whole world? I don't understand. Do you mean not just us? Not just the community? Do you mean Elsewhere too? I'm sorry, sir. I don't understand exactly. Maybe I'm not smart enough. I don't know what you mean when you say 'the

whole world' or 'generations before him.' I thought there was only us. I thought there was only now.

GIVER. There's much more. There's all that goes beyond—all that is Elsewhere—and all that goes back, and back, and back. I received all of those, when I was selected. And here in this room, all alone, I re-experience them again and again. It is how wisdom comes. And how we shape our future. I am weighted with them. It's as if... it's like going downhill through deep snow on a sled. At first it's exhilarating: the speed; the sharp, clear air; but then snow accumulates, builds up on the runners, and you slow, you have to push hard to keep going, and—that meant nothing to you, did it?

JONAS. I don't understand at all.

GIVER. Of course you didn't. You don't know what snow is, do you? Or a sled? Runners?

JONAS. No, sir.

GIVER. Downhill? The term means nothing to you?

JONAS. Nothing, sir.

GIVER. Well, it's a place to start. I'd been wondering how to begin. Move to the bed, and sit down. Remove your tunic first. Close your eyes. Relax, this will not be painful.

JONAS. What are you going to do, sir?

GIVER. I'm going to transmit the memory of snow.

The GIVER places his hands on JONAS' bare back. The Memory appears on a large screen. JONAS is physically in the Annex but emotionally experiencing the Memory:

On screen, snowflakes quietly whirl through the air. In the Annex with eyes closed, JONAS takes a deep breath and exhales, seeing his breath for the first time. He sticks out his tongue as if catching a snowflake. The sensation of it makes him smile. His hands move as though they were grasping onto the imaginary sled beneath him. The footage of the memory begins to move as though JONAS were traveling downhill. JONAS is overwhelmed with the rush of excitement and freedom. The sled slows down; JONAS nudges it forward, not wanting the ride to end.

During the course of the Memory, JONAS begins to identify some of the objects. He is learning.

JONAS: Snow. Sled. Hill. Downhill. Runners.

He sits for a moment, still on the sled, before the Memory fades away and he is solely in the Annex.

GIVER. How do you feel?

JONAS. Surprised.

GIVER. Whew, even transmitting that tiny memory to you—I think it lightened me just a little.

JONAS. Do you mean—you did say I could ask questions? Do you mean that now you don't have the memory of it—of that ride on the sled—any more?

GIVER. That's right. A little weight off this old body.

JONAS. But it was such fun! And now you don't have it anymore! I took it from you!

GIVER. All I gave you was one ride, on one sled, in one snow, on one hill. I have a whole world of them. I could give them to you one by one, a thousand times, and there would still be more.

JONAS. Are you saying that I—I mean we—could do it again? I'd really like to. I think I could steer, by pulling the rope. I didn't try this time, because it was so new.

GIVER. Maybe another day, for a treat. But there's not time, really, just to play. I only wanted to begin by showing you how it works. Now, I want to—

JONAS. Why don't we have snow, and sleds, and hills? And when did we, in the past? Did my parents have sleds when they were young? Did you?

GIVER. No. It's a very distant memory. That's why it was so exhausting—I had to tug it forward from many generations back. It was given to me when I was a new Receiver, and the previous Receiver had to pull it through a long time period, too.

JONAS. But what happened to those things? Snow, and the rest of it?

GIVER. Climate Control. Snow made growing food difficult, limited the agricultural periods. And unpredictable weather made transportation almost impossible at times. It wasn't a practical thing, so it became obsolete when we went to Sameness. And hills too. They made conveyance of goods unwieldy. Trucks, busses. Slowed them down, so— Sameness.

JONAS. I wish we had all those things, still. Just now and then.

GIVER. So do I. But the choice is not ours.

JONAS. But sir, since you have so much power—

GIVER. Honor. I have great honor. So will you. But you will find that that is not the same as having power. Sit quietly now. Since we've entered into the topic of climate, let me give you something else. And this time I'm not going to tell you the name of it, because I want to test the receiving. You should be able to perceive the name without being told. I gave away snow and sled and downhill and runners by telling them to you in advance.

Another Memory materializes:

JONAS sits and the light around him changes; warm and bright. Instead of cold this time, he begins to sense warmth. He doesn't move. He is outdoors. The warmth comes from above. It is not as exciting as the last Memory, but pleasant and soothing.

JONAS. Sunshine.

The Memory fades; the lighting returns to it's previous state.

GIVER. Good. You did get the word. That makes my job easier. Not so much explaining.

JONAS. And it came from the sky.

GIVER. That's right. Just the way it used to.

JONAS. Before Sameness. Before Climate Control.

GIVER. You receive well, and learn quickly. I'm very pleased with you. That's enough for today, I think. We're off to a good start.

JONAS. Sir, the Chief Elder told me—she told everyone—and you told me, too, that it would be

painful. So I was a little scared. But it didn't hurt at all. I really enjoyed it.

GIVER. I started you with memories of pleasure. My previous failure gave me the wisdom to do that. Jonas, it will be painful. But it need not be painful yet.

JONAS. I'm brave. I really am.

GIVER. I can see that. Well, since you asked the question—I think I have enough energy for one more transmission. This will be the last today.

A Memory develops, almost identical to the previous one. The lights burn hotter and brighter than they did before. JONAS senses the passage of time and his skin begins to sting. It feels hot to the touch and starts to turn red. HE tries to bend his elbow and feels a sharp pain in the crease.

HE tries to grasp the word for it, but the pain distracts him. The Memory fades, but the pain remains.

JONAS. Ouch. Owwww. It hurt. And I couldn't get the word for it.

GIVER. It was sunburn.

JONAS. It hurt a *lot*. But I'm glad you gave it to me. It was interesting. And now I understand better, what it meant, that there would be pain.

GIVER. Get up, now. It's time for you to go home.

JONAS. Goodbye, sir. Thank you for my first day. Sir?

GIVER. Yes, do you have a question?

JONAS. It's just that I don't know your name. I thought you were the Receiver of Memory, but you say that now I'm the Receiver of Memory. So I don't know what to call you.

GIVER. Call me the Giver.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

Scene 1

JONAS rushes in on his bicycle, rings the buzzer on the door, dashes past the ATTENDANT and arrives out of breath in THE GIVER's annex.

JONAS. I apolo—

GIVER. You're one minute late.

JONAS. I'm one minute late because something happened. I'd like to ask you about it, if you don't mind. I think it's what you called "Seeing-Beyond."

GIVER. Describe it.

JONAS. The first time I noticed it was when I was playing catch with Asher at school. First it was just an ordinary apple, and then it changed, and then went back to normal. The next time it happened was when we were all at the ceremony. And the other day when I was riding my bike with my friend Fiona, something about her changed. She didn't change, exactly, her hair did. It was the same length,

same shape, I can't quite—it changed. I don't know how, or why, but it did. And then today on my way here, I was distracted by the flowers outside. They were different too. And that's why I was one minute late.

GIVER. When I gave you the memory yesterday, the first one, on the sled, did you look around?

JONAS. (*confused*) Yes, but the stuff—I mean, snow—made it hard to see anything.

GIVER. Did you look at the sled?

JONAS. No, I only felt it under me. I dreamed of it last night too. But I don't remember seeing it in my dream either, just feeling it.

GIVER. While I was observing you, before the selection, I perceived that you probably had the capacity, and what you describe confirms that. When I was your age, about to become the new Receiver—I began to experience it, though it took a different form. With me it was... well I won't describe that now; you wouldn't understand it yet. But I think I can guess how it's happening with you. Let me make a little test, to confirm my guess. Sit down.

JONAS removes his tunic and closes his eyes waiting for THE GIVER'S touch. When it doesn't come, he opens his eyes.

GIVER. Call back the memory of the ride on the sled. Just the beginning of it, where you're at the top of the hill, before the slide starts. And this time, look down at the sled.

JONAS. What? But don't you have to give me the memory?

GIVER. It's your memory now. It's not mine to experience any longer. I gave it away.

JONAS. But how can I call it back?

GIVER. You can remember last year, or the year that you were a Seven, or a Five, can't you?

JONAS. Well, of course.

GIVER. It's much the same. Everyone in the community has one-generation memories like those. But now you will be able to go back farther. Try. Just concentrate.

JONAS closes his eyes and breathes deeply. Slowly, the Memory appears. Hazy at first, then clearer. It is the same snow as the very first memory, the same hill. On the screen, from JONAS' P.O.V: HE looks down and sees only his own legs. He moves them aside and takes a look at the sled. The sled has the same quality as the other objects that have changed. But the sled doesn't change. It just is. HE opens his eyes and the memory is gone.

JONAS. Yes! I saw it in the sled!

GIVER. Let me try one more thing. Look over there, to the bookcase. Do you see the very top row of books, the ones behind the table, on the top shelf?

As JONAS looks around the room, the books on the top shelf suddenly have red spines, but only for a moment, then they return to their nondescript gray.

JONAS. It happened. But then went away again.

GIVER. I'm right then. You're beginning to see the color Red.

JONAS. The what?

GIVER. How to explain this? Once, back in the time of all the memories, everything had a shape and a size, the way things still do, but they also had a quality called color. There were a lot of colors and one of them was called Red. That's what you're starting to see. Your friend Fiona has red hair; I've noticed it before actually. When you mentioned her hair earlier, I had a feeling that's what you were seeing.

JONAS. And the faces of the people at the ceremony?

GIVER. No, flesh isn't red, but it has red tones in it. There was a time, actually—you'll see it in the memories later, when flesh was many different colors. That was before we went to Sameness. Today, flesh is all the same, and what you saw was the red tones. It probably wasn't as deep or vibrant as the apple or your friend's hair. *(HE laughs)* We've never completely mastered Sameness. I suppose the genetic scientists are still hard at work trying to work all the kinks out. Hair like Fiona's must drive them crazy.

JONAS. *(trying to understand)* And the sled? It has that same thing—color. Red. But it didn't Change. It just Was. It was so—oh I wish language were more precise! The red was so beautiful!

GIVER. It is.

JONAS. Do you see it all the time?

GIVER. I see all of them. All the colors.

JONAS. Will I?

GIVER. Of course. When you receive the memories. You have the capacity to see beyond. You'll gain wisdom, then, along with colors. And lots more.

JONAS. Why can't everyone see them? Why did colors disappear?

GIVER. Our people made that choice, the choice to go to Sameness. Before my time, before the previous time, back and back and back. We relinquished color when we relinquished sunshine and did away with differences. We gained control of many things, but we had to let go of others.

JONAS. (*With a newfound ferocity*) We shouldn't have!

THE GIVER looks at him, startled. Then smiles, pleased.

GIVER. You've come quickly to that conclusion. It took me many years. Maybe your wisdom will come much more quickly than mine. Sit back down; we have so much to do.

JONAS. Giver, how did it happen when you were becoming the Receiver? You said that Seeing-Beyond happened to you, but not in the same way.

GIVER. Another day. Now we must work. And I've thought of a way to help you with the concept of color. Close your eyes and be still, now.

A memory appears on the screen: a richly colorful rainbow.

JONAS. Red. Orange. Yellow. Green. Blue. Indigo. Violet. Red. Orange. Yellow. Green. Blue. Indigo.

Violet. Red. Orange. Yellow. Green. Blue. Indigo. Violet. Red. Orange. Yellow. Green. Blue. Indigo. Violet. Red. Orange. Yellow. Green. Blue. Indigo. Violet.

The sound of JONAS' voice repeating the colors continues as the lights fade in the Annex. The Memory remains bright.

Scene 2

ASHER and FIONA are gathering their bicycles from the bike ports. JONAS joins them moments later. The recitation of the colors fade out as FIONA begins to speak.

FIONA. I looked for you yesterday so we could ride home together. Your bike was still there, and I waited for a little while. But it was getting late, so I went on home.

JONAS. I apologize for making you wait.

FIONA. (*Automatically*) I accept your apology.

JONAS. I stayed a little longer than I expected.

There is an uncomfortable silence as SHE waits for an explanation. HE doesn't offer one and changes the subject.

JONAS. You've been doing so many volunteer hours with the Old. There won't be much that you don't already know.

FIONA. Oh, there's lots to learn. Administrative work, dietary rules, punishment for disobediences—

did you know that they use a discipline wand on the Old, the same as for small children? And there's occupational therapy, and recreational activities, and medications and we had a wonderful Ceremony of Release yesterday! You remember Larissa, don't you? She looked so happy—I really think I'll like it better than school!

JONAS. Me too.

Silence again.

FIONA. Well, I guess I'll be seeing you later then. Bye, Ash.

SHE climbs onto her bike and heads home alone. At the same moment, JONAS notices the flowers around him have become Red. He has an idea:

JONAS. Asher, look at those flowers very carefully.

HE places his hand on ASHER'S shoulder and concentrates on the color of the petals, trying to make ASHER see it too.

ASHER. *(Pulling away, uncomfortable)* What's the matter? Is something wrong?

JONAS. No, nothing. I thought for a minute that they were wilting, and we should let the Gardening Crew know they needed watering.

ASHER. They look fine to me. I have to get home or I'll be late for Evening Meal. See you later, Jonas.

ASHER quickly mounts his bike and speeds off, leaving JONAS staring at the flowers.

Scene 3

Another day of Training in the Annex.

JONAS. But I want them! It isn't fair nothing has color!

GIVER. Not fair? Explain what you mean.

JONAS. Well... If everything's the same, then there aren't any choices! I want to wake up in the morning and *decide* things! A blue tunic or a red one? But it's all the same, always. I know it's not important what you wear. It doesn't matter, but...

GIVER. It's the choosing that's important, isn't it?

JONAS. My little brother—no, that's incorrect.

He's not my brother, not really. But this newchild that my father takes care of—his name's Gabriel?

GIVER. Yes, I know about Gabriel.

JONAS. Well, he's right at the age where he's learning so much. He grabs toys when we hold them in front of him—my father says he's learning small-muscle control. And he's really cute. But now that I can see colors, at least sometimes, I was just thinking: what if we could hold up things that were bright red, or bright yellow, and he could *choose*? Instead of Sameness.

GIVER. He might make wrong choices.

JONAS. Oh. Oh, I see what you mean. It wouldn't matter for a newchild's toy. But later it *does* matter, doesn't it? We don't dare to let people make choices of their own.

GIVER. Not safe?

JONAS. Definitely not safe. What if they were allowed to choose their own mate? And chose *wrong*? Or what if they chose their own jobs?

GIVER. Frightening, isn't it?

JONAS. (*laughing*) Very frightening. I can't even imagine it. We really have to protect people from wrong choices.

GIVER. It's safer.

JONAS. Much safer.

JONAS. Giver, don't you have a spouse? Aren't you allowed to apply for one?

GIVER. No, there's no rule against it. And I did have a spouse. You're forgetting how old I am, Jonas. My former spouse now lives with the Childless Adults.

JONAS. Oh, of course.

GIVER. You'll be allowed to apply for a spouse too, Jonas, if you want to. I'll warn you though, it will be difficult. Your living arrangements will have to be different than those of most family units, because the books are forbidden to citizens. You and I are the only ones with access to the books.

JONAS. So if I have a spouse, and maybe children, I will have to hide the books from them?

GIVER. That's correct. And there are other difficulties, too. You remember the rule that says the new Receiver can't talk about his training? When you become the official Receiver, when we're finished here, you'll be given a whole new set of rules. Those are the rules that I obey. And it won't surprise you that I am forbidden to talk about my work to anyone but the new Receiver. That's you, of course. So there will be a whole part of your

life which you won't be able to share with a family. It's hard, Jonas. It was hard for me. You do understand, don't you, that this *is* my life? The memories?

JONAS. But I see you taking walks. Doesn't life consist of the things that you do each day? There isn't anything else, really.

GIVER. I walk. I eat at mealtime. And when I am called by the Committee of Elders, I appear before them, to give them counsel and advice.

JONAS. Do you advise them often?

GIVER. Rarely. Only when they are faced with something that they have not experienced before. Then they call upon me to use the memories and advise them. But it very seldom happens.

Sometimes, I wish they'd ask for my wisdom more often—there are so many things I could tell them; things I wish they would change. But they don't want change. Life here is so orderly, so predictable—so painless. It's what they've chosen.

JONAS. I don't even know why they *need* a Receiver, then, if they never call upon him.

GIVER. They need me. And you. They were reminded of that ten years ago.

JONAS. What happened ten years ago? Oh, I know. You tried to train a successor and it failed. Why? Why did that remind them?

GIVER. When the new Receiver failed, the memories that she had received were released. They didn't come back to me, they went—I don't know exactly, back to the place memories once existed before Receivers were created. Someplace out *there*—and the people had access to them.

Apparently, that's the way it was once. Everyone had access to memories. It was chaos. They really suffered for a while. Finally it subsided as the memories were assimilated. But it certainly made them aware of how much they needed a Receiver to contain all that pain. And knowledge.

JONAS. But you have to suffer like that all the time.

GIVER. It's my life. It will be yours.

JONAS. Along with walking, and eating, and... reading? That's it?

GIVER. Those are simply the things I *do*. My *life* is here.

JONAS. In this room?

GIVER. No. *Here*, in my being. Where the memories are.

JONAS. My instructors in science and technology have taught us about how the brain works. It's full of electrical impulses. It's like a computer. If you stimulate one part of the brain with an electrode, it—

GIVER. They know nothing.

JONAS. Nothing? But my instructors—

GIVER. Oh, your instructors are well trained. They know their scientific facts. *Everyone* is well trained for his or her job. It's just that... without the memories, it's all meaningless. They gave that burden to me. And to the previous Receiver. And to the one before him.

JONAS. And back and back and back.

GIVER. That's right. And next it will be you. A great honor.

JONAS. Yes, sir. They told me that at the ceremony. The very highest honor.

Scene 4

Memory: A completely unfamiliar location. (Africa). JONAS hears a loud crack tear through the air.

JONAS (V.O.) Guns.

All around him, men are shouting. Then, an enormous thud as something falls. For the first time, JONAS sees what the GIVER means by people having flesh of different colors. Two of the men are dark. Two are light. JONAS watches them rip the tusks away from the elephant they shot. JONAS is surrounded by the color Red. Blood is everywhere. The men, having taken what they wanted, climb into a vehicle and drive away, Leaving JONAS staring at the corpse. A second elephant appears and strokes the corpse with its trunk. It raises its massive head and lets out a roar JONAS has never heard before. It is a sound of rage and grief.

The roar echoes as the memory fades and JONAS enters his family's dwelling.

Scene 5

The following morning. MOTHER, FATHER, LILY, and GABRIEL are already at the table. JONAS joins them and takes his pill. Lily is hugging her Comfort Object, an elephant.

MOTHER. You slept soundly, Jonas? No dreams?

JONAS. *(an unconvincing lie)* I slept very soundly.
FATHER. *(Rocking GABRIEL in a basket on the floor.)* I wish this one would.

MOTHER. So do I, he's always so fretful at night.

JONAS. Lily, did you know that once there really were elephants. Live ones?

LILY. Right. Sure, Jonas.

JONAS places his hand on her shoulder, trying to share a piece of the memory.

LILY. Jonas, you're hurting me!

JONAS. I apologize for hurting you.

LILY. 'Cept your apology.

FATHER begins to comb LILY's hair and tie her ribbons. SHE tries to wriggle away, but it's no use. JONAS wanders out of the room and arrives:

Scene 6

Mid-February in the Annex.

JONAS. Giver, what causes you pain? The Chief Elder told me, at the beginning, that the receiving of memory causes terrible pain. And you described for me that the failure of the last new Receiver released painful memories to the community. But I haven't suffered, Giver. Not really. Oh, I remember the sunburn you gave me. But that wasn't so terrible. What is it that makes you suffer so much? If you gave some of it to me, maybe your pain would be less.

GIVER. Sit down. It's time, I suppose. I can't shield you forever. You'll have to take it all on eventually.

JONAS sits on the bed, waiting.

GIVER. All right. I've decided. We'll start with something familiar. Let's go once again to a hill, and a sled.

HE places his hands on JONAS' back and a Memory appears. For a third time, JONAS is on top of a hill with snow blowing all around. As the sled begins its decent, however, JONAS cannot control it as he had before. The feeling of freedom has been replaced with terror. The sled hits a bump and JONAS is thrown off. HIS leg twists beneath him and a crack of bone is heard. HIS face is scraped as he lies still in the snow. The pain grows and JONAS cannot move. In the Annex, JONAS screams in agony. The Memory fades, but the pain is real.

JONAS. *(begging)* May I have a relief-of-pain, please?

THE GIVER doesn't answer. JONAS slowly gets up off the bed, able to move, but still aching. HE leaves the Annex, unlocks his bike, and begins to push it home.

He arrives at his dwelling and hears MOTHER, FATHER, and LILY laugh loudly inside.

JONAS. They have never known pain.

Desperately lonely, JONAS puts his bike away and enters the dwelling.

Scene 7

A montage of pleasant Memories. Some are visual, some are audible, and others still images.

1. *Sailing on a placid lake.*
2. *A meadow of wildflowers.*
3. *A vibrant sunset.*
4. *The Tower Bridge, London*
5. *A birthday party; celebrating individuality*
6. *Horseback riding; the bond between humans and animals*
7. *The Pyramids, Egypt*
8. *Surfing*
9. *A museum exhibit; filled with every color imaginable*
10. *A campfire in the woods.*
11. *The Eiffel Tower, Paris*
12. *A wedding ceremony.*
13. *Flying a kite.*
14. *The Great Wall, China*
15. *A candlelit dinner table*
16. *A department store*
17. *Building a sand castle.*
18. *Splashing in a swimming pool.*
19. *The Taj Mahal, India*
20. *A star-studded sky*

21. *Snowboarding*

22. *A basketball game*

23. *A dance class*

24. *The joy of playing with a puppy.*

25. *Bouncing on a trampoline.*

Scene 8

Memory: A neglected child: unloved and unfed.

JONAS. Why do you and I have to hold these memories?

GIVER. It gives us wisdom. Without wisdom, I could not fulfill my function of advising the Committee of Elders when they call upon me.

JONAS. But what wisdom do you get from hunger?

GIVER. Some years ago, before your birth, a lot of citizens petitioned the Committee of Elders. They wanted to increase the rate of births. They wanted each Birthmother to be assigned four births instead of three, so that the population would increase and more Laborers would be available.

JONAS. That makes sense.

GIVER. The idea was that certain family units could accommodate an additional child.

JONAS. We could. We have Gabriel this year, and it's fun, having a third child.

GIVER. The Committee of Elders sought my advice. It made sense to them too, but it was a new idea, and they came to me for wisdom.

JONAS. And you used your memories?

GIVER. Yes. The strongest memory that came was hunger. It came from many generations back.

Centuries back. The population had gotten so big that hunger was everywhere. Excruciating hunger and starvation. It was followed by warfare.

JONAS doesn't understand the strange word.

JONAS. So you described it to them?

GIVER. They don't want to hear about pain. They just seek the advice. I simply advised them against increasing the population.

JONAS. But you said that was before my birth. They hardly ever come to you for advice. Only when they—what was it you said? When they have a problem they've never faced before. When did it happen last?

GIVER. Do you remember the day the plane flew over the community?

JONAS. Yes, I was scared.

GIVER. So were they. They prepared to shoot it down. But they sought my advice. I told them to wait.

JONAS. But how did you know the plane was lost?

GIVER. I didn't. I used my wisdom, from the memories. I knew that there had been times in the past—terrible times—when people had destroyed others in haste, in fear, and had brought their own destruction.

JONAS. That means that you have memories of destruction. And you have to give them to me, too, because I have to get the wisdom. But it will hurt.

GIVER. It will hurt terribly.

JONAS. But why can't *everyone* have the memories? I think it would seem a little easier if the memories

were shared. You and I wouldn't have to bear so much by ourselves, if everybody took a part.

GIVER. You're right. But then everyone would be burdened and pained. They don't want that. And that's the real reason the Receiver is so vital to them, and so honored. They've selected me—and you—to lift that burden from themselves.

JONAS. When did they decide that? It wasn't fair! Let's change it!

GIVER. How do you suggest we do that? I've never been able to think of a way, and I'm supposed to be the one with all the wisdom.

JONAS. But there are two of us now. Together we can think of something! Why can't we apply for a change of rules?

GIVER. The decision was made long before my time, or yours. And before the previous Receiver, and —

JONAS. (*bitterly*) Back and back and back.

Scene 9

FATHER, MOTHER, and JONAS are sitting at the table. LILY is on the floor playing with GABRIEL.

FATHER. All this extra time I've put in with him, I hope they're not going to decide to release him.

MOTHER. Maybe it would be for the best. I know you don't mind getting up with him at night, but the lack of sleep is awfully hard for me.

LILY. If they release Gabriel, can we get another newchild as a visitor?

FATHER. *(laughing)* No, it's very rare, anyway, that a newchild's status is as uncertain as Gabriel's. It probably won't happen again for a long time.

Anyway, they won't make the decision for a while. Right now, we're all preparing for a release we'll probably have to make very soon. There's a birth mother who's expecting twin males next month.

MOTHER. Oh dear, if they're identical, I hope you're not the one assigned—

FATHER. I am. I'm next on the list. I'll have to select the one to be nurtured, too. It's usually not hard, though. Usually it's just a matter of birth weight. We release the smaller of the two.

JONAS. Why don't we put Gabriel's crib in my room tonight? I know how to feed and comfort him. And it would let you both get some sleep.

FATHER. You sleep so soundly, Jonas. What if his restlessness didn't wake you?

LILY. If no one goes to tend Gabriel, he gets very loud. He'd wake all of us if Jonas slept through it!

FATHER. You're right, Lily-billy. Alright Jonas, let's try it, just for tonight. I'll take the night off and we'll let Mother get some sleep, too.

JONAS picks up GABRIEL'S basket and carries it into HIS sleepingroom. GABRIEL is quiet. JONAS sits on his bed watching the baby for a moment. Then falls asleep.

Later, JONAS is awoken by GABRIEL'S restless cries. HE picks up the baby and rocks him gently. Slowly, the sounds of the Sailboat memory are heard; water lapping at the side of the boat, a

gentle wind, and birds calling overhead.

GABRIEL'S cries die down and the memory becomes fainter. Startled, JONAS pulls away from GABRIEL for a moment and stares at the now calm child. Making a decision, JONAS picks up GABRIEL once again and places a hand on HIS tiny back. JONAS calls back what is left of the memory and releases the rest of the Sailboat Memory to GABRIEL, who sleeps noiselessly through the night.

Scene 10

JONAS arrives at the Annex and finds THE GIVER sitting rigid in a chair, his face full of pain.

JONAS. I'll come back tomorrow sir, unless there's something I can do to help.

GIVER. Please, take some of the pain.

JONAS helps THE GIVER out of his chair and over to the bed. HE removes his tunic and sits down. THE GIVER stares at him, lost.

JONAS. Put your hands on me.

A Memory: War. JONAS hears a chaotic, noisy place. Around him, the sounds of wounded men and horses bleeding and groaning. A feeble voice nearby whispers "Water." JONAS hears the boy take a drink, then silence. A still image flashes on the screen: A young boy on the ground covered in dirt and blood. His eyes are blank. In the distance, JONAS can hear guns and canons being fired. HE

listens to the growing horrors that surround them. When he can bear it no longer, JONAS opens his eyes, and finds himself safe in the Annex.

GIVER. *(unable to look JONAS in the eye)* Forgive me.

JONAS sits silently, trying to calm himself. HE stares into nothingness and rocks back and forth slowly.

JONAS. I don't want the memories, don't want the horror, don't want the wisdom, and don't want the pain. I don't have a choice.

GIVER. There are so many good memories.

JONAS looks at him, as though for the first time.

JONAS. What is your favorite memory? You don't have to give it away yet. Just tell me about it, so I can look forward to it, because I'll have to receive it when your job is done.

GIVER. Sit back. I'm happy to give it to you.

Memory: A fire glows in the hearth and a tree twinkles with colored lights. A table is beautifully set with food, and a dog lays curled up on the floor. Around the tree are packages wrapped in paper and ribbon and a small children are taking turns picking out which ones they want to open first. Their parents sit on a couch with a much older couple. One child opens a package and squeals with delight. Everyone laughs and the child excitedly hugs the

old woman and climbs into her lap. She kisses his forehead and holds him gently.

JONAS opens his eyes, basking in the lingering warmth of the Memory.

GIVER. What did you perceive?

JONAS. Warmth. And happiness. And let me think— family. That it was a celebration of some sort, a holiday. And something else—I can't quite get the word for it.

GIVER. It'll come to you.

JONAS. Who were the old people? Why were they there?

GIVER. They were called Grandparents.

JONAS. Grand parents?

GIVER. It means "parents of the parents," long ago.

JONAS. Back and back and back? So actually there could be parents of the parents of the parents of the parents?

GIVER. That's right. A little like looking at yourself in a mirror looking at yourself in a mirror.

JONAS. But my parents must have had parents! I never thought about that before! Who are *my* parents of the parents? Where are they?

GIVER. You could go look in the Hall of Open Records. You'd find the names. But think, son. If you apply for children, then who will be their parents of the parents?

JONAS. My mother and father, of course.

GIVER. Exactly. And where will they be?

JONAS. Oh. When I finish my training and become a full adult, I'll be given my own dwelling. And

then when Lily does, a few years later, she'll get *her* own dwelling, and maybe a spouse, and children if she applies for them. And mother and father, as long as they're still working and contributing to the community, they'll go and live with the other Childless Adults. And they won't be part of my life anymore. And after that, when the time comes, they'll go to the House of the Old; they'll be well cared for, and respected. And when they're released there'll be a celebration.

GIVER. Which you won't attend.

JONAS. Well of course not. I probably won't even know about it. By then, I'll be so busy with my own life, and Lily will, too. So our children, if we have them, won't know who their parents or the parents are, either. It seems to work pretty well that way, doesn't it? The way we do it in our community. I didn't realize there was any other way, until now. I certainly liked that memory though; I can see why it was your favorite. I couldn't quite get the word for the whole feeling of it, the feeling that was so strong in the room.

GIVER. Love.

JONAS. (*a completely new concept*) Love.

FIONA's smiling face flickers across the Memory Screen momentarily.

JONAS. Giver?

GIVER. Yes?

JONAS. I feel very foolish saying this. Very, very foolish.

GIVER. Nothing is foolish here. Trust the memories and how they make you feel.

JONAS. Well. I know you don't have the memory anymore, because you gave it to me, so maybe you won't understand this—

GIVER. I will. I have a vague wisp of it left. And I have many other memories of families and holidays and happiness. And love.

JONAS. I was thinking that... I can see that it wasn't a very practical way to live, with the Old right there in the same place, where maybe they wouldn't be well taken care of, the way they are now, and that we have a better arranged way of doing things. But anyway, I was thinking, I mean, feeling actually, that it was kind of nice, then. And I wish we could be that way, and you could be my grandparent. The family in the memory seemed a little more—

GIVER. Complete.

JONAS. I liked the feeling of love. I wish we still had that. Of course, I do understand that it wouldn't work very well. And that it's much better to be organized the way we are now. I can see that it was a dangerous way to live.

GIVER. What do you mean?

JONAS. Well, they had fire, right there in the room! There was a fire in the fireplace and candles burning on a table. I can certainly see why those things were outlawed. Still, I did like the light they made. And the warmth.

During this conversation, MOTHER and FATHER appear in another area, preparing for the Evening

Meal. JONAS speaks to them from the Annex. They respond as though he's in the dwelling with them.

JONAS. Mother? Father? I have a question I want to ask you.

FATHER. What is it, Jonas?

JONAS. Do you love me?

FATHER. Jonas! You, of all people. Precision of language, please!

JONAS. What do you mean?

MOTHER. Your father means that you used a very generalized word, a word so meaningless, it's become almost obsolete—

JONAS. *(To THE GIVER)* Meaningless. I've never felt anything as meaningful as that memory.

MOTHER. —and of course our community can't function smoothly if people don't use precise language. You could ask, "Do you enjoy me?" The answer is "Yes."

FATHER. Or, "Do you take pride in my accomplishments?" and the answer is wholeheartedly, "Yes."

MOTHER. Do you understand why it is inappropriate to use a word like 'love'?

JONAS. Yes, thank you, I do. *(To THE GIVER, decisively)* I'm going to stop taking my pills.

THE GIVER smiles. HE too had stopped taking the pills years ago.

JONAS enters his sleepingroom and peers into GABRIEL's crib.

JONAS. Gabriel? *(no response)* Things could change, Gabe, things could be different. I don't know how, but there must be some way for things to be different. There could be colors. And grandparents. And everybody could have the memories. You know about memories. Gabe? There could be love.

JONAS lifts Gabriel out of his crib and gives him a Memory: the lights change to suggest a soft rain against window panes. The sound of rainfall continues as JONAS places GABRIEL in his crib and climbs into bed.

END ACT II

ACT III

Scene 1

Several weeks later. A pile of bicycles lay to one side, but no one appears to be around. JONAS recognizes some of the bicycles.

JONAS. Asher! Hey, Ash! Where are you?

FIONA. Pssheewww! Pow! Pow! Pow!

A CHILD pops up from behind a bush; staggers forward, clutches her stomach, and falls to the

ground dramatically—making funny noises and faces.

CHILD. You got me!

ASHER. (*Coming out of hiding*) Blam! Blam!
You're in my line of ambush, Jonas! Watch out!

JONAS looks horrified as he recognizes this childhood game as a game of War.

CHILD. Attack!

FIONA. Counter-attack!

ASHER. You're hit, Jonas! Pow! You're hit again!

JONAS stands completely still. The others stare at him, why isn't he playing along?

The image of the boy killed in battle flashes momentarily on the screen. JONAS struggles not to cry.

FIONA. What's wrong, Jonas? It was only a game.

ASHER. You ruined it.

JONAS. Don't play it anymore.

ASHER. I'm the one training for the Assistant Recreation Director. Games aren't your area of expertness.

JONAS. Expertise.

ASHER. Whatever. You can't say what we play, even if you *are* going to be the new Receiver. (*almost immediately*) I apologize for not giving you the respect you deserve.

JONAS. Asher, you had no way of knowing this. I didn't know it myself until recently. It's a cruel game. In the past, there have been—

ASHER. I said, I *apologize*, Jonas.

JONAS. (*futilely*) I accept your apology.

FIONA. Do you want to go for a ride along the river, Jonas?

JONAS stares at HER for a moment, then slowly shakes his head. HE watches his two FRIENDS climb onto their bikes and ride away.

JONAS. I can't change anything.

Scene 2

November. GABRIEL has begun to walk, and wobbles around the living room while MOTHER, FATHER, and LILY watch with amusement.

LILY. I can't wait to get my very own bicycle next month! Father's is too big for me. I fell. Good thing Gabe wasn't in the child seat!

MOTHER. A very good thing.

FATHER. I want to get to sleep early tonight. Tomorrow's a big day for me. The twins are being born tomorrow, and the test results show that they're identical.

LILY. One for here, one for Elsewhere! One for here, one for Elsewh— do you actually take it to Elsewhere?

FATHER. No, I just have to make the selection. I weigh them, hand the larger over to the Nurturer

who is standing by, waiting, then I get the smaller one all cleaned up and comfy. Then I perform a small ceremony of release and then I wave bye-bye.

HE waves at GABRIEL who giggles and waves back.

LILY. And then somebody else comes to get him? From Elsewhere?

FATHER. That's right, Lily-billy.

LILY. What if they give the little twin a name in Elsewhere, like, oh maybe, Jonathan? And here, in our community, at his naming, the twin we kept here was named Jonathan. And then there would be two children with the same name who would *look* exactly the same, and someday, maybe when they were a six, one group of sixes would go visit another community on a bus, in the *other* group of sixes would be a Jonathan who was exactly the same as the *other* Jonathan, and then maybe they would get mixed up and take the wrong Jonathan home, and maybe his parents wouldn't notice, and then—

Lights come up on JONAS and THE GIVER.

JONAS. Giver, do you ever think about Release?

MOTHER. Lily, I have a wonderful idea. Maybe when you become a twelve, they'll give you the Assignment of Storyteller! I don't think we've had a Storyteller in the community for a long time. But if I were on the Committee, I would definitely choose you for that job!

GIVER. Do you mean my own Release, or just the general topic of release?

LILY. I have a *better* idea for one more story. What if actually we were *all* twins and didn't know it, and so Elsewhere there would be another Lily, and another Jonas, and another Father, and another Asher, and another Chief Elder, and another—
FATHER. Lily. It's bedtime.

MOTHER, FATHER, LILY, and GABRIEL exit.

JONAS. Both, I guess. I apologize—I mean, I should have been more precise. But I don't know exactly what I mean.

GIVER. I guess I do think about it occasionally. I wish I could put a request in for it sometimes. But I'm not permitted to do that until the new Receiver is trained.

JONAS. I can't request release either, it's in my rules.

GIVER. I know that. They hammered out those rules after the failure ten years ago.

JONAS. Giver, tell me what happened. Please.

GIVER. On the surface, it was quite simple. A Receiver-to-be was selected the same way you were. The ceremony was held and the crowd cheered, as they did for you. The new Receiver was puzzled and a little frightened, as you were.

JONAS. My parents told me it was a female. What was she like?

GIVER. She was a remarkable young woman. Very self possessed and serene. Intelligent, eager to learn. You know, Jonas, when she came to me in this

room, when she presented herself to begin her training—

JONAS. Can you tell me her name? My parents said it wasn't to be spoken again in the community. But couldn't you say it just to me?

GIVER. (*a painful hesitation*) Her name was Rosemary.

JONAS. Rosemary. I like that name.

GIVER. When she came to me for the first time, she sat there in the chair where you sat on your first day. She was eager and excited and a little scared. We talked. I tried to explain things as well as I could.

JONAS. The way you did for me.

GIVER. The explanations are difficult. The whole thing is so beyond one's experience. But I tried.

And she listened carefully. Jonas, I gave you a memory that I told you was my favorite. The room, with the family, and grandparents?

JONAS. Yes. It had that wonderful feeling with it. You told me that it was love.

GIVER. You can understand then, that that's what I felt for Rosemary. I loved her. I feel it for you, too.

JONAS. What happened to her?

GIVER. Her training began. She received well, as you do. She was so enthusiastic. She delighted to experience new things. I remember her laughter...

JONAS. What happened? Please. Tell me.

GIVER. It broke my heart, Jonas, to transfer pain to her. But it was my job. It was what I had to do, the way I've had to do it to you. (*silence*) I gave her happy memories. Sometimes I chose one just because I knew it would make her laugh, and I so treasured the sound of her laughter in this room that

had always been so silent. But she was like you, Jonas. She wanted to experience everything. She knew that it was her responsibility. And so she asked me for more difficult memories.

JONAS. You didn't give her *war*, did you? Not after just five weeks?

GIVER. No. But I gave her loneliness. I gave her loss. I transferred a memory of a child taken from its parents. She appeared stunned at its end. I backed off, gave her more little delights: a ride on a merry-go-round; a kitten to play with; a picnic. But everything changed, once she knew about pain. I could see it in her eyes.

JONAS. She wasn't brave enough?

GIVER. She insisted that I continue, that I not spare her. She said it was her duty. And I knew of course that she was correct. I couldn't bring myself to inflict physical pain on her. But I gave her anguish of many kinds. Poverty, and hunger, and terror. But I *had* to, Jonas. It was my job. And she had been chosen. Finally, one afternoon, we finished for the day. It had been a hard session. I tried to finish—as I do with you—by transferring something happy and cheerful. But the times of laughter were gone by then. She stood up very silently, frowning, as if she were making a decision. Then she came over to me and put her arms around me. She kissed my cheek. She left here that day, left this room, and did not go back to her dwelling. I was notified by the Speaker that she had gone directly to the Chief Elder and asked to be released.

JONAS. But it's against the rules! The Receiver-in-Training can't apply for rel—

GIVER. It's in your rules, Jonas. But it wasn't in hers. She asked for release, and they had to give it to her. I never saw her again.

JONAS. Giver, I can't request release, I know that. But what if something happened: an accident? What if I fell into the river like the little Four, Caleb, did? Well, that doesn't make sense because I'm a good swimmer. But what if I couldn't swim, and fell into the river and was Lost? Then there wouldn't be a new Receiver, but you would already have given away an awful lot of important memories—almost a whole year's worth! So even though they would select a new Receiver, the memories would be gone except for the shreds you have left of them? And then what if—(*JONAS begins to laugh*)—I sound like my sister, Lily!

GIVER. You just stay away from the river, my friend. The community lost Rosemary after five weeks and it was a disaster for them. I don't know *what* the community would do if they lost you.

JONAS. Why was it a disaster?

GIVER. I think I mentioned to you once that when she was gone, the memories came back to the people. If you were to be Lost in the river, Jonas, your memories would not be lost with you.

Memories are forever. Rosemary had only those five weeks worth and most of them were good ones. But there were those few terrible memories, the ones that had overwhelmed her. For a while they overwhelmed the community. All those feelings! They'd never experienced that before. I was so devastated by my own grief at her loss, and my own feeling of failure, that I didn't even try to help them

through it. I was angry, too. (*Thinks for a moment*) You know, if they lost you, with all the training you've had now, they'd have all those memories again themselves.

JONAS. They'd hate that.

GIVER. They certainly would. They wouldn't know how to deal with it at all.

JONAS. The only way I deal with it is by having you there to help me.

GIVER. I suppose that I could—

JONAS. You could what?

GIVER. If you floated off in the river, I supposed I could help the whole community the way I've helped you. It's an interesting concept. I need to think about it some more. Maybe we'll talk about it again sometime. But not now. I'm glad you're a good swimmer, Jonas. But stay away from the river.

HE laughs distractedly, HIS thoughts seem far away and his heart is troubled. JONAS looks at the clock.

JONAS. I'm sorry I wasted so much time with my questions. I was only asking about release because my father is releasing a newchild today. A twin. He has to select one and release the other one. They do it by weight. Actually, I suppose he's already finished. I think it was this morning.

GIVER. (*Quietly*) I wish they wouldn't do that.

JONAS. Well they can't have two identical people running around! Think about how confusing that would be! I wish I could watch.

GIVER. You can watch.

JONAS. No. They never let children watch, it's very private.

GIVER. Jonas, I know that you read your training instructions very carefully. Don't you remember that you are allowed to ask anyone anything?

JONAS. Yes, but—

GIVER. When you and I have finished our time together, you will be the new Receiver. You can read the books; you'll have the memories. You have access to *everything*. It's part of your training. If you want to watch a release, you simply have to ask.

JONAS. Well, maybe I will then, but it's too late for this one. I'm sure it was this morning.

GIVER. All private ceremonies are recorded. *Do you want to see this morning's release?*

JONAS hesitates.

GIVER. *(firmly)* I think you should.

JONAS. Alright then.

THE GIVER walks to the speaker on the wall and flips the switch ON.

SPEAKER. Yes, Receiver, how may I help you?

GIVER. I would like to see this morning's release of the twin.

SPEAKER. One moment, Receiver. Thank you for your instructions.

Lights up on FATHER at work. HIS every move is being broadcast on the Memory Screen. JONAS and THE GIVER watch the screen. FATHER is in a room with a scale and a few other instruments lying

on a table. HE is holding the newborn twins, wrapped in blankets.

JONAS. It's just an ordinary room. I thought maybe they'd have it in the Auditorium, so that everybody could come, but I suppose for a newchild—

GIVER. Shhh.

JONAS. That's my father.

FATHER unwraps the babies and lays them on the table. HE lifts them onto the scale one at a time.

FATHER. Good. *(laughs)* I thought for a moment that they might be exactly the same. *Then* we'd have a problem. But you're six pounds even. And you, little guy, are only five pounds ten ounces—a shrimp!

JONAS. That's the special voice he uses with Gabriel.

GIVER. Watch.

JONAS. Now he cleans him up and makes him comfy. He told me.

GIVER. Be quiet, Jonas. *Watch.*

FATHER picks up a syringe and small bottle from the table. HE fills the syringe and carefully pierces the newchild's forehead. The infant cries.

JONAS. Why's he—

GIVER. Shhh.

FATHER. I know, I know. It hurts, little guy. But I have to use a vein. And the ones in your arms are

still too teeny-weeny. (*cheerfully*) There, all done. That wasn't so bad, was it?

The newchild stops crying. His tiny body jerks violently and then goes still. JONAS recognizes the awkwardly twisted body, but not sure from where. FATHER disposes of the syringe and cleans up the room.

Once more, the image of the young soldier boy flashes across the screen. His body contorted similarly to the newchild. JONAS understands.

JONAS. (*almost inaudibly*) He killed it. My father killed it.

FATHER continues to tidy the room. Then, picks up a small box, places the child inside, then puts the lid on. HE opens a door in the wall, resembling a trash chute, and loads the carton into it.

FATHER. (*still in his 'baby-voice'*) Bye-bye, little guy.

The screen goes black. Calmly. THE GIVER speaks.

GIVER. When the Speaker notified me that Rosemary had applied for release, they turned on the tape to show me the process. There she was—my last glimpse of that beautiful child—waiting. They brought in the syringe and asked her to roll up her sleeve. You suggested, Jonas, that maybe she wasn't brave enough? I don't know about bravery,

what it is, what it means. I do know I sat here numb with horror and helplessness. And I listened as Rosemary told them she'd prefer to inject herself. Then she did so. I didn't watch. I looked away. (*bitterly*) There you go, Jonas. You were wondering about release.

Scene 3

JONAS. I won't! I won't go home! You can't make me!

GIVER. Sit up, Jonas.

JONAS stops screaming and flailing, but whimpers and shudders silently

GIVER. You may stay here tonight. I want to talk to you. But you must be quiet now, while I contact your family unit. No one must hear you cry.

JONAS. (*wildly*). No one heard that little twin cry, either! No one but my father!

THE GIVER goes to the speaker on the wall

SPEAKER. Yes, Receiver. How may I help you?

GIVER. Notify the new Receiver's family unit that he will be staying with me tonight, for additional training.

SPEAKER. I will take care of that, sir. Thank you for your instructions.

JONAS. (*out of control*) I will take care of that, sir! I will do whatever you like, sir! I will kill people, sir! Old people? Small newborn people? I'd be

happy to kill them, sir. Thank you for your instructions, sir. How may I help you—

THE GIVER grabs JONAS by the shoulders and shakes him firmly.

GIVER. Listen to me, Jonas. They can't help it. They know *nothing!*

JONAS. You've said that to me before.

GIVER. I said it because it's true. It's the way they live. It's the way that life was created for them. It's the same life that you would have, if you had not been chosen as my successor.

JONAS. But he *lied* to me!

GIVER. It's what he was told to do and he knows nothing else.

JONAS. What about you? Do you lie to me to?

GIVER. I am empowered to lie, but I have never lied to you.

JONAS. Release is always like that? For people who break the rules three times? For the Old? Do they kill the Old, too?

GIVER. Yes.

JONAS. And what about Fiona? She loves the Old! She's in training to care for them. Does she know yet? What will she do when she finds out? How will she feel?

GIVER. Fiona is already being trained in the fine art of release. She's very efficient at her work, your red-haired friend. Feelings are not part of the life she's learned.

JONAS. What should I do? I can't go back! I can't!

GIVER. First, I shall order our evening meal. Then we shall eat.

JONAS. (*cruelly*) Then we'll have a sharing of feelings?

GIVER. Jonas, you and I are the only ones that *have* feelings. We've been sharing them now for almost a year.

JONAS. I'm sorry, Giver. I don't mean to be so hateful. Not to you.

GIVER. And after we eat, we'll make a plan.

JONAS. A plan for what? There's nothing we can do. It's always been this way. Before me, before you, before the ones who came before you. Back and back and back.

GIVER. Jonas, it's true that it has been this way for what seems forever. But the memories tell us that it has not always been. People felt things once. You and I have been part of that, so we know. We know that they felt things like pride, and like sorrow, and like—

JONAS. Love. And pain.

GIVER. The worst part of holding the memories is not the pain. It's the loneliness of it. Memories need to be shared.

JONAS. I've started to share them with you.

GIVER. That's true. And having you here with me over the past year has made me realize that things must change. For years I've felt that they should, but it seemed so hopeless. Now for the first time I think there might be a way. And you brought it to my attention, barely two hours ago.

Scene 4

Later that night. JONAS is wrapped in one of THE GIVER'S robes. They have been formulating a plan.

JONAS. I'll do it. At least, I think I can do it. I'll try, but I want you to come with me. If I fail, I'll likely be killed; if I stay, I won't want to live.

GIVER. Jonas, the community has depended, all these generations, back and back and back, on a resident Receiver to hold their memories for them. I've turned over many of them to you in the past year. And I can't take them back. There's no way for me to get them back if I have given them. So if you escape, once you are gone—and Jonas, you know that you can never return—

JONAS. Yes, I know. But if you come with me—

GIVER. If you get away, if you get beyond, if you get to Elsewhere, it will mean that the community will have to bear the burden themselves, of the memories you had been holding for them. I think that they can, and that they will acquire some wisdom. But it will be desperately hard for them. When we lost Rosemary ten years ago, and her memories returned to the people, they panicked. And those were such few memories, compared to yours. When your memories return, they'll need help. Remember how I helped you in the beginning? When the memories were new to you?

JONAS. It was scary at first. And it hurt a lot.

GIVER. You needed me then. And now they will.

JONAS. It's no use. They'll find someone to take my place. They'll choose a new Receiver.

GIVER. There's no one ready for training, not right away. Oh, they'll speed up the selection of course. But I can't think of another child who has the right qualities—

JONAS. There's a little female with pale eyes, but she's only a Six.

GIVER. I know the one you mean, her name is Katherine. But she is too young, so they will be forced to bear those memories.

JONAS. I want you to come, Giver.

GIVER. I have to stay here. I want to, Jonas. If I go with you, we will take away all their protection from the memories, Jonas, the community will be left with no one to help them. They'll be thrown into chaos. They'll destroy themselves. I can't go.

JONAS. Giver, you and I don't need to care about the rest of them. *(Realizing)* Of course we do, it's the meaning of everything.

GIVER. And in any case, Jonas. I wouldn't make it. I'm very weakened now. Did you know that I no longer see Colors? *(HE takes JONAS' hand)* You have the Colors. And you have the courage. I will help you to have the strength.

JONAS. A year ago, when I had just become a Twelve, when I began to see the first color, you told me that the beginning had been different for you. But that I wouldn't understand.

GIVER. That's true. And do you know, Jonas, that with all your knowledge now, with all your memories, with all that you've learned—still you won't understand? Because I've been a little selfish. I haven't given any of it to you. I wanted to keep it for myself to the last.

JONAS. Keep what?

GIVER. When I was just a boy, younger than you, it began to come to me. But it wasn't the Seeing Beyond for me, it was different. For me, it was Hearing Beyond.

JONAS. What did you hear?

GIVER. Music. I began to hear something truly remarkable, and it is called Music. I'll give you some before I go.

JONAS. No, Giver. I want you to keep that, to have with you, when I'm gone.

THE GIVER goes to the speaker on the wall.

SPEAKER. Yes, Receiver. How may I help you?

GIVER. I need a driver and a vehicle late tomorrow night.

SPEAKER. I will take care of that, sir. Thank you for your instructions.

JONAS. I'll leave at midnight. The Food Collectors will be finished picking up the evening meal remains by then and the Path Maintenance Crew don't start their work that early. So there won't be anyone to see me, unless of course someone is out on emergency business.

GIVER. I don't know what you should do if you are seen, Jonas. I have memories of course, of all kinds of escapes. People fleeing from terrible things throughout history. But every situation is individual. There is no memory of one like this.

As HE speaks, JONAS moves from the Annex to his sleepingroom and begins to pack his clothes.

JONAS. I'll be careful. No one will see me.

(Scribbling on a sheet of paper) I'll leave a note telling them I'll be back in time for the Ceremony. And they won't say anything to anyone about my rudeness because it would reflect on their parenting.

GIVER. As the Receiver-in-Training you are held in very high respect already. So I think you wouldn't be questioned very forcefully.

JONAS. *(teasing)* I'd just say I was on some important errand for the Receiver. I'd say it was all your fault that I was out after hours.

They laugh nervously. MOTHER enters and begins to set the table for the family unit's evening meal. FATHER joins her as LILY play with GABRIEL on the floor.

FATHER. Enjoy it, little guy. This is your last night as a visitor.

LILY. What do you mean?

JONAS. And anyway, everyone is so involved in the Ceremony that they probably won't notice I'm not there. Now that I don't have to sit with my age group anymore, Asher will assume I'm with my parents, or with you--

GIVER. And your parents will assume you're with Asher, or with me. There's no nighttime attendant. I'll leave the door unlocked. You simply slip into the room. I'll be waiting for you.

FATHER. Well, you know we had him stay overnight at the Nurturing Center. It seemed like a good opportunity, with Jonas gone, to give it a try. He'd been sleeping so soundly.

JONAS: It will take everyone a while to realize that I'm not there at all.

MOTHER. Didn't go well?

FATHER. That's an understatement. It was a disaster. He cried all night, apparently. The crew couldn't handle it. They were really frazzled by the time I got to work.

LILY. (*laughing*) Gabe, you naughty thing.

JONAS moves to join his family in the kitchen.

MOTHER hands JONAS his pill. HE pretends to swallow it, but slips it into his pocket when her back is turned.

FATHER. So we obviously had to make the decision. Even I voted for Gabriel's release during our meeting this afternoon.

JONAS. Release?

FATHER. We certainly gave it our best try, didn't we?

MOTHER. Yes we did.

JONAS. When? When will he be released?

FATHER. First thing tomorrow morning. We have to start our preparations for the Naming Ceremony, so we thought we'd get this taken care of right away. It's bye-bye to you, Gabe, in the morning.

GIVER. And you'll be long on your way, by then.

JONAS returns to the Annex.

JONAS. Please, come with me. I understand they'll need you, but I need you too.

GIVER. My work will be finished when I have helped the community to change and become whole. I'm grateful to you, Jonas, because without you, I would have never figured out a way to bring about the change. But your role now is to escape. And mine is to stay.

JONAS. But don't you want to be with me, Giver?

GIVER. I love you, Jonas. But I have another place to go. When my work here is finished, I want to be with my daughter.

JONAS. I didn't know you had a daughter! You told me you'd had a spouse, but you'd never told me about your daughter.

GIVER. (*for the first time, truly happy*) Her name was Rosemary.

Scene 5

In his sleepingroom, JONAS stands over GABRIEL's crib. Two packed bags lie at his feet.

JONAS. We had a plan, Gabe. The Giver and I. But all of that is changed now. Every minute counts. You're going to be released in the morning, Gabe. I can't let them do that to you. (*GABRIEL whimpers in his sleep.*) Don't worry. I'm not afraid. Tomorrow morning, life will go on. Life where nothing is unexpected or inconvenient. Or unusual. Life without color, or pain, or past. Tomorrow, Gabe, the orderly disciplined life we've always known will continue—without us.

Without another word, JONAS throws both bags over his shoulder, lifts GABRIEL out of his crib, and makes his way to the bikeport. HE removes FATHER's bicycle, with the childseat on the back, and straps GABRIEL in. JONAS sneaks around the side of the dwelling to where the remnants of the evening meal wait to be picked up by the Collection Crew. HE packs the extra food into his bag.

JONAS places his hand on GABRIEL and quickly transmits a Memory:

A swinging hammock beneath two palm trees. The sounds of water lapping at the nearby shore.

GABRIEL falls into a deep sleep.

JONAS. I'm sorry, Giver. I didn't have time for your memories of courage and strength. I hope that you can understand. I hope that I can be strong enough. Goodbye.

HE climbs onto the bicycle and begins to pedal. The bicycle remains stationary as a stretch of empty road appears on the screen. The light changes from night to day and the once barren landscape is now speckled with trees. JONAS stops beside a stream and lifts GABRIEL out of his seat. He takes some food out of his bag and fills a cup with water.

JONAS. Mealtime, Gabe.

GABRIEL is enjoying being out of the childseat and runs freely around JONAS. JONAS looks around nervously; it isn't safe to be out in the open. Surely people have noticed his absence.

HE chases after GABRIEL, playing for only a moment. HE grabs the child and holds him close. THEY sit down beneath a tree.

JONAS. I know it's morning, and I know you just woke up. But we have to sleep now.

JONAS lies down with GABRIEL in his arms and the two of them sleep until nightfall. GABRIEL wakes up, screaming.

GABRIEL. Plane! Plane!

Moments later, a terrifying noise. It is a search plane flying low overhead. The rumbling of the engines roar. GABRIEL cries as JONAS watches him in disbelief.

JONAS. How did you do that? Can you Hear-Beyond too? Like the Giver?

GABRIEL stares at him blankly.

JONAS. It's alright. They can't see color, we are only smears of gray to them; blending in with everything else.

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.) How do Search Planes work? Jonas?

JONAS (V.O) They use heat-seeking devices to identify body warmth, Instructor.
INSTRUCTOR (V.O) Correct.

Remembering this, JONAS transmits a Memory of snow to GABRIEL. The plane passes overhead and fades into the distance. GABRIEL looks at JONAS and giggles.

JONAS. I guess we'd better keep moving.

HE gathers their belongings and straps GABRIEL back into the childseat. The landscape continues to change as the sun moves through the sky. More trees. A waterfall. It is peaceful. Just as the sun begins to set on the second day:

GABRIEL. Plane! Plane!

Alarmed, JONAS looks up at the sky and sees nothing. A few tense moments later, JONAS laughs and sees what caught GABRIEL'S attention. It is a bird. The first one either of them has ever seen. It caws carelessly in the air.

JONAS. That's not a plane, Gabe. It's called a... a... *(He's having a hard time remembering the word)* Bird. It's a bird, Gabe. The skies used to be full of them.

More birds are heard overhead. JONAS and GABRIEL watch them in wonderment.

JONAS. It's incredible, Gabe. Compared to a life of Sameness and predictability it's amazing what lies around every corner. Things I never would have known existed. Flowers, birds, deer. Remember that one animal we saw? The reddish-brown one? I can't get the name for it, but it was beautiful. *(GABRIEL whimpers.)* I know, I know you're hungry. But we don't have anymore food. *(HE places his hands on GABRIEL'S back.)* I know it's not the same, but it's the best I can do.

Using all of his strength, JONAS gives GABRIEL a memory of a huge feast. A banquet with every food imaginable.

JONAS. I'm sorry, Gabe. If we'd have stayed put, we wouldn't be so hungry now. I was given a choice. And I made the wrong one. No. If I had stayed I would be starved in other ways. All my life I would have been hungry for feelings, for color, for love. And you? You wouldn't have had a life at all. So really, there wasn't any choice.

It begins to rain. GABRIEL cries. JONAS cries too.

JONAS. I'm hungry. And cold. And weak. And I'm afraid I can't save you.
The rain turns into snow. GABRIEL shivers in his blankets.

JONAS. It's called snow, Gabe. Snowflakes. They fall down from the sky and they're very beautiful.

JONAS tries to give GABRIEL the Memory of sunshine. The lights flicker, but JONAS lacks the strength to warm them. Have the memories escaped? HE tries to bring forth the Memory for himself. Slowly, weakly, it materializes. JONAS is overcome with joy and eagerly shares it with GABRIEL. For a moment, they are both warmed by the glow of the memory. And as quickly as it appeared, it is gone and they are surrounded by snow and darkness.

JONAS screams out into the night. HE holds GABRIEL as tightly as he can.

One more failed attempt to remember warmth. The lights flicker.

JONAS tries a new approach. HE remembers FIONA, ASHER, MOTHER, FATHER, LILY, and THE GIVER. Their faces all appear brightly smiling on the screen.

JONAS. We're almost there, Gabriel. I don't know why, but I remember this place.

A few steps farther, JONAS trips over something hidden in the snow. A red sled. HE begins to laugh uncontrollably. All at once JONAS begins to see lights all around him twinkling from the trees. Red, Blue, Yellow.

With certainty and joy he runs underneath the lights and hears what he knows to be music. People are singing.

JONAS. We made it! This is it! The place where families create and keep memories! Where they celebrate love. Come on, Gabe. They're waiting for us.

The joyous singing swells and seems to surround him. JONAS holds GABRIEL in his arms and basks in the music drifting towards him from all directions. JONAS even hears music from behind him, from the community he left behind. Or perhaps it is only an echo.

End Act III

Getting Started:

The play has gone through drastic changes since its first incarnation. The following pages provide a look at how my process began in June of 2006. Included are:

- A preliminary outline of the play
- A comprehensive list of rules of the community
- A list of the memories Jonas receives as well as the ones he shares with Gabriel
- The known buildings in the community
- The known possible Assignment options
- Character names; meanings; and countries of origin
- Precision of Language: the language used in the novel and the everyday equivalents in our world
- Character breakdown; character traits and personality descriptions from the novel

The page numbers on the left hand side correspond to the page of the book in which that information was found. A copy of the book has been included with the script for further reference.

ACT ONE

- Scene 1** **pages 1-4; 23-25** **November Morning**
- 2 planes fly overhead – community is terrified
 - Jonas goes to school—Asher gets there late and apologizes to class
 - Instructor uses it to teach more precise language
 - Midday meal time—apple changes, takes it home
- Scene 2** **pages 5-22** **That Evening**
- Evening meal and sharing of feelings
 - Father brings Gabe home
- Scene 3** **pages 26-33** **The next day**
- Volunteer hours at the house of the old
- Scene 4** **pages 34-39** **A week later**
- Morning telling of dreams—Stirrings
- Scene 5** **pages 40-49** **Mid-December; morning of ceremony**
- Getting ready for the Ceremony
- Scene 6** **pages 50-64** **Afternoon**
- The Ceremonies
- Scene 7** **pages 65-71** **That Evening**
- After the ceremony
 - Reading the guidelines
- Scene 8** **pages 72-87** **The Next Day**
- First day of training
 - Meeting the Giver
 - MEMORIES: snow, sled, hill, sunshine, sunburn
 - “Call me the Giver.”

ACT TWO

- Scene 1** **pages 91-99** **The following afternoon**
- Training with the Giver
 - Learns about “seeing beyond”
 - MEMORY: Rainbow
 - Importance of colors and choices
- Scene 2** **pages 88-90; 99** **January Morning**
- Talking about training with Fiona
 - Trying to make Asher see color
- Scene 3** **pages 100-101** **the Annex/the dwelling**
- MEMORY: elephant hunters taking tusk
 - Jonas trying to give Lily the elephant memory
 - [simultaneously]
- Scene 4** **pages 101-110** **Mid-February afternoon**
- Talking to the giver about spouses and life
 - Giver in pain, Jonas asks for painful memory
 - MEMORY: broken leg, sledding accident
- Scene 5** **page 110-113; 121-122** **March—October training sessions**
- MEMORY Montage:

- Sunset; sailing; flowery meadow; neglected & starved child; birthday parties; horseback riding; museums
- Trying to find a way to change the community
- Scene 6** **pages 113-117** **October Evening**
 - Gabriel sleeps in Jonas' room
 - Gives him memory accidentally
- Scene 7** **pages 118-126** **Afternoon**
 - Training in the Annex
 - MEMORY: warfare
 - Jonas cracks under the pressure
 - MEMORY: family at Christmas
- Scene 8** **pages 125-129** **that evening**
 - Asks parents about love
 - Gives Gabe memories, promises him love
- Scene 9** **pages 130-138** **November morning**
 - Sees Asher and kids playing war game
 - Realizes no one understands feelings at all
- Scene 10** **pages 139-162** **afternoon/night**
 - Talk about failure Receiver
 - Rosemary; love
 - Watches Father release the twin
 - Recognizes death and murder
 - Jonas throws tantrum, can't live in lies anymore
 - Formulate a plan for escape and change
- Scene 11** **pages 163-166** **December night**
 - Father says Gabe will be released in the morning
 - Jonas escapes earlier than planned with the baby and his dad's bike
- Scene 12** **pages 166-179** **Early December—Christmas Eve**
 - Escapes at night; steals food
 - Gives Gabe MEMORY: swinging on a hammock on a beach
 - Biking out of community; fades into isolated plains
 - Search planes fly overhead
 - Sees wildlife for the first time
 - MEMORY: banquets and feasts
 - Thinks he made the wrong choice
 - Sprains ankle
 - Cries because he's afraid he can't save Gabriel
 - No longer cares about himself—learns true love
 - See snow; climbs a hill, finds a sled
 - Sleds down the hill with Gabe
 - Sees Christmas lights and trees; hears music
 - Knows it's a place where people keep their memories
 - Hears an echo of music behind him from the community.

THE COMMUNITY (“SAMENESS”)

Page	Rules
1	it was against the rules for pilots to fly over the community.
1	one year ago: adults as well as children stopped what they were doing and waited, confused, for an explanation of the frightening event.
2	SPEAKER: “immediately leave your bicycles where they are.” (later) “a Pilot-in-Training had misread his navigational instructions and made a wrong turn. Desperately, the pilot had been trying to make his way back before his error was noticed. Needless to say, he will be released.” (as though the speaker found this amusing)
2	to be released from the community was a final decision, a terrible punishment, an overwhelming statement of failure.
6	animals—neither child knew what the word meant, exactly, but it was often used to describe someone uneducated or clumsy, someone who didn’t fit in.
7	release of new children was always sad, because they hadn’t had the chance to enjoy life within the community yet. And they hadn’t done anything wrong.
7	two occasions of RELEASE were not punishment: release of the elderly (which was a time of celebration for a life well and fully lived) and release of a newchild (which always brought a sense of what-could-we-have-done).
8	NIGHT CREW NURTURING—a lesser job, assigned to those who lacked the interest or skills or insight for the more vital jobs of the daytime hours. Most did not even have spouses because they lacked the essential capacity to connect to others, which was required for the creation of a family unit
8	FAMILY UNIT—two children—one male, one female—to each family unit. It was written very clearly in the rules.
9	a boy in Jonas’ group whose father had been released years before. No one ever mentioned it; the disgrace was unspeakable. It was hard to imagine.
9	RITUAL-- the evening telling of feelings--keeping feelings hidden was against the rules.
10	Ceremony of Twelve—even the smallest children knew that it lay in the future for each of them.
11	Ceremony of Ones was always noisy and fun. Always 50 in each year’s group.
12	newchildren are named at the ceremony. No one is supposed to know the name before-hand. Father snuck a look at the list. “Jonas was fascinated. It didn’t seem a terribly important rule, but the fact that his father had broken a rule at all awed him.”
13	Bicycles were one of the few rules that were not taken very seriously and were almost always broken. The children received their bicycles at Nine; they were not allowed to ride bicycles before then. But almost always, the

older brothers and sisters had secretly taught the younger ones. There was talk of changing the rule and giving bicycles at an earlier age.

13 when something went to the committee for study, people always joked about it.

14 rules were very hard to change.

14 the RECEIVER was the most important Elder

14 The Ceremony of Twelve was the last of the Ceremonies. The most important.

15 ASSIGNMENTS—it was a secret selection, made by the committee of elders, the leaders of the community, who too the responsibility so seriously that there were never even any jokes made about assignments.

15 in school, at recreation time, and during volunteer hours, he had noticed the Elders watching him and the other Elevens. He had seen them taking notes. He knew, too, that the Elders were meeting for long hours with all of the instructors that he and the other Elevens had had during their years of school.

16 there are very rarely disappointments [in assignments].

17 after 12, age isn't important. Most of us lose track of how old we are as time passes. The information is in the Hall of Open Records and we could look it up if we wanted to, what's important is the preparation for adult life and the training you'll receive in your assignments.

17 you'll no longer be spending time with your group. After the Ceremony of Twelve, you'll be with your Assignment Group.

18 no more volunteer hours, no more recreation hours, so your friends will no longer be as close.

18 when you're an Eight, your comfort object will be taken away and recycled to the younger children. You should be starting to go off to sleep without it.

20 almost every citizen in the community had dark eyes.

20 no one mentioned [Jonas= lighter eyes = different] such things; it was not a rule, but was considered rude to call attention to things that were unsettling or different about individuals.

21 mirrors were rare in the community; they weren't forbidden, but there was no real need of them.

21 light eyes were not only a rarity but gave the one who had them a certain look—what was it? Depth.

22 BIRTH MOTHERS—three births, that's all. After that, they are Laborers for the rest of their adult lives, until the day they enter the House of the Old.

22 BIRTH MOTHERS—never even get to see newchildren.

22 SPEAKER: "attention. This is a reminder to females under nine that hair ribbons are to be neatly tied at all times."

23 there would be an announcement like that soon, and it would be directed mainly at Lily, though her name, of course, would not be mentioned. Everyone would know.

23 SPEAKER: “attention. This is a reminder to male elevens that objects are
not to be removed from the recreation area and that snacks are to be eaten,
not hoarded.”

23 No one had mentioned it, not even his parents, because public
announcement had been sufficient to produce the appropriate remorse.

23 Announcement, necessary apologies = standard procedures and he had
deserved them.

24 apple= the same nondescript shade, about the same shade as his own tunic.

24 Small print on the identification badge attached to his tunic.

25 all evenings went the same in the family unit, in the dwelling, in the
community: quiet, reflective, a time for renewal and preparation for the
day to come.

26 the hours of the day were so carefully regulated

26 becoming an Eight: faced with the freedom of choice—first volunteer
hours.

27 there was never any comfortable way to mention or discuss one’s
successes without breaking the rule against bragging. It was a minor rule,
rather like rudeness, punishable only by gentle chastisement. But still.
Better to steer clear of an occasion governed by a rule which would be so
easy to break.

27 Nametags on the bicycles.

28 all of his volunteer hours would be carefully tabulated at the hall of open
records.

28 Once a twelve had not completed his volunteer hours and was not given
his assignment. Received it privately with no applause or celebration. A
disgrace that had clouded his entire future.

29 HOUSE OF THE OLD—comfortably furnished, thick carpet, serene and
slow paced.

29 volunteers wear smocks

29 CARETAKERS—work at the house of the old.

30 Nametag on the old woman’s robe.

30 the tub would be filled in a minute and the water would stop flowing
automatically.

30 it was against the rules for children or adults to look at another’s
nakedness; but the rule did not apply to newchildren or the Old. It was a
nuisance to keep oneself covered and required apology if one had by
mistake glanced another’s body.

32 RELEASE OF THE OLD—Roberto—instructor of Elevens. There was
the telling of his life, we all raised our glasses and cheered. Chanted the
anthem. He made a goodbye speech and several of us made speeches
wishing him well. He was thrilled. He just bowed to all of us and then
walked through the special door in the Releasing Room. Pure happiness.
They don’t let children come.

34 RITUAL—morning retelling of dreams. Begins with Threes.

35 Jonas knew he had to tell it all, that it was not only alright but necessary to
tell all of a dream.

36 Mother tidied the remains of the morning meal and placed the tray by the
front door for the Collection Crew.

37 STIRRINGS—in the book of rules. SPEAKER: “attention. A reminder
that stirrings must be reported in order for treatment to take place.”

37 most citizens ignored many of the commands and reminders read by the
speaker.

38 STIRRINGS—pills. His parents took one each morning. And some of his
friends did too.

38 He didn’t know what they were but to ask might have fallen into that
uncomfortable category of “being different.” always better, less rude, to
talk about things that were the same.

39 STIRRINGS—took the pills, the feelings disappeared, and the stirrings
were gone.

40 SEVENS—get front-buttoned jackets. The front buttoned jacket was the
first sign of independence, the first visible symbol of growing up.

40 FOUR FIVE and SIXES—all wore jackets that fastened down the back so
that they would have to help each other dress and would learn
interdependence.

41 the bicycle at NINE would be a powerful emblem of moving gradually out
into the community, away from the protective family unit.

41 until then—ride on the back of parent’s bicycle.

41 entire community attended the ceremony each year—2 days holiday from
work.

41 Earliest ceremony—the naming.

41 Jonas sat in the balcony with the elevens.

42 normally, a child who couldn’t sleep through the night would be labeled
“Inadequate” and released from the community. Gabriel was labeled
“Uncertain” and given more time.

42 Each family member had been required to sign a pledge that they would
not become attached to Gabriel and that they would relinquish him
without protests or appeal when he was assigned to his own family after
next year’s Ceremony.

42 agreed, because if he was released, they would not see him again. Ever.

43 Fiona was waiting to receive a newchild w her parents—but rare that there
was such an age gap between children in a family unit.

44 Loss in the community is very rare. Community is extraordinarily safe.
Each citizen is watchful and protective of all children.

44 CEREMONY OF LOSS—murmur the name throughout an entire day,
less and less frequently, softer in volume, as the long and somber day goes
on until person seems to fade away gradually from everyone’s
consciousness.

44 MURMUR OF REPLACEMENT CEREMONY—repeating the name for
the first time since the loss: softly and slowly at first, then faster and with
greater volume. It was as if the first one was returning.

44 Release is not the same as Loss.

- 45 EIGHT—jacket with smaller buttons and for the first time, pockets,
indicating that she was mature enough now to keep track of her own small
belongings. (and volunteer hours for the 1st time.)
- 45 a small child's transgressions, always small ones, reflected negatively on
his parents guidance and infringed the community's sense of order and
success.
- 46 CEREMONY OF TEN—boring and time consuming. Each child's hair
was snipped into its distinguishing cut: females lost their braids and males
took on a more manly short style which exposed their ears.
- 46 CEREMONY OF ELEVEN—not one of the more interesting. New
clothing, undergarments for females, longer trousers for males w/ special
pocket for a calculator needed in school. No accompanying speech. Just a
marker of time waiting to become a twelve.
- 47 Midday meal with packaged food.
- 48 if you don't fit in, you can apply for Elsewhere and be released.
- 48 The community was so meticulously ordered, the choices so carefully
made.
- 48 MATCHING OF SPOUSES—sometimes an adult would wait months or
even years before a Match was approved and announced. Factors:
disposition, energy level, intelligence, and interests had to correspond and
interact perfectly. Matches are monitored by the Committee of Elders for
three years before they could apply for children.
- 48 COMMITTEE OF ELDERS—matching of spouses, naming and
placement of children, assignments.
- 50 at the ceremony—arranged by their original numbers, the numbers they
had been given at birth. Each child knew his number, parents used them in
irritation at a child's misbehavior. Mischief made one unworthy of a
name.
- 50 after Three, children progressed at much the same level
- 51 after becoming a Twelve, age no longer matters. He would be an adult,
like his parents, though a new one and untrained still.
- 51 RULES—opening his tunic, taking a brief ride on a friend's bicycle =
against the rules.
- 51 The Chief Elder—reelected every 10 years. Gives initial speech at
Ceremony, very much the same every year: the profound importance of
Assignment.
- 51 The current Chief Elder is a woman.
- 54 INSTRUCTORS of THREES—in charge of the acquisition of correct
language.
- 54 Punishment for small children was a regulated system of smacks with the
discipline wand.
- 54 CHILDCARE SPECIALISTS—trained very carefully in the discipline
methods
- 55 PRECISION OF LANGUAGE – was one of the most important tasks of
small children.

56 “Thank you for your childhood.” Speaker gave it special meaning for each
of them.

57 The Chief Elder made no mistakes. Not at the ceremony of twelve.

61 Elevens are still children after all. So we continue to observe during
training, and to modify behavior when necessary.

61 The Receiver-in-Training cannot be observed, cannot be modified. That is
stated quite clear in the rules. He is to be alone, apart, while he is prepared
by the current Receiver for the job, which is the most honored in our
community.

61 Must be chosen by Unanimous choice of the committee. The can have no
doubts.

62 RECEIVER OF MEMORY—most honored job in the community. He
needs Intelligence, Integrity, Courage, Wisdom, Capacity to See Beyond.

64 CHANTING his name—the community was accepting him and his new
role. Giving him life.

65 Night after the Ceremony—12s study their instruction for the beginning of
their training.

66 under 9s—ride strapped onto a seat on the back of a parents’ bicycle

67 Highest Degree of Disgrace—a name designated Not-To-Be-Spoken

68 Receiver of Memory—RULES

1. Go immediately at the end of school hours each day to the Annex
entrance behind the House of the Old and present yourself to the attendant.
2. Go immediately to your dwelling at the conclusion of Training Hours
each day.
3. From this moment you are exempted from rules governing rudeness.
You may ask any question of any citizen and you will receive answers.
4. Do not discuss your training with any other member of the community,
including parents and Elders.
5. From this moment on, you are prohibited from dream-telling.
6. Except for illness or injury unrelated to your training, do not apply for
any medication.
7. You are not permitted to apply for Release.
8. You may lie.

(*no recreation. didn’t compel him to be rude, just gives option.*)

69 being told where to go and when is to be expected in the Community.

69 medication was always available to citizens, even to children, through
their parents.

70 trained since earliest childhood never to lie. It is an integral part of the
learning precise speech.

70 no one in the community was starving, had ever been starving, would even
be starving.

70 the reason for precision of language was to ensure that unintentional lies
were never uttered.

72 During the night [after ceremonies] the nameplate of each new Twelve
had been removed by the maintenance crew and replaced with the style
that indicated citizen-in-training.

72 the Annex was very ordinary, its door unremarkable. Heavy handle. A
buzzer on the wall. Buzz in. door unlocks.

73 The lobby was very small and contained only a desk. Door unlocks.

73 no doors in the community were locked, ever.

73 joke throughout the community—Dept. of Bicycle Repair, unimportant
little office, relocated so often no one ever knew where it was.

74 Furniture was standard throughout the community: practical, sturdy, the
function of each piece clearly defined. (Bed, table, desk)

74 THE ANNEX slightly different; spacious and comfortably furnished.
Fabrics on the chairs and sofa slightly thicker and more luxurious; the
table legs were not straight like those at home, but slender and curved,
with a small carved decoration at the roof. The bed, in an alcove at the far
end o the room, was draped with splendid cloth embroidered over its
entire surface with intricate designs.

74 most conspicuous difference—the BOOKS
Each household contained: a dictionary, and the thick community volume
which contained descriptions of every office, factory, building, and
committee. And the Book of Rules, of course. Never knew other books
exsisted.

74 this rooms walls were completely covered in bookcases, filled, which
reached to the ceiling.

75 GIVER—wore same clothing as all the Elders, had been seen before, but
seemed separated from others on Committee of Elders

75 GIVER—didn't give standard accepting-of-apology response

77 The Whole World—the Community and Elsewhere... Hard to grasp the
idea.

78 I thought there was only us, only now.--- only present time.

79 SPEAKER in the ANNEX—this one had a switch, which Giver snapped
to 'off'. To have the power to turn the speaker off was an astonishing
thing.

79 every dwelling had a speaker on the wall.

83 CLIMATE CONTROL—in the community. No snow, unpredictable
weather wasn't practical, so it became obsolete.

83 the community lives in SAMENESS

83 flat land only. No hills. Slowed down trucks and busses (used only for
transporting goods)

89 CLASSES—language and communications, commerce and industry,
science and technology, civil procedures and government.

90 House of the Old—administrative work, dietary rules, punishment with
discipline wand, occupational therapy, recreational activities, medication
and more.

94 Before SAMENESS—people could see color. There was a time that flesh
was different colors.

95 Never really mastered Sameness, geneticists are trying to work the kinks
out.

95 the people made the choice to go to Sameness. Gave up color when gave
up sunshine, gained control of things, lost others.
97 everything is a flat and hueless shade. (Gray? Beige?)
98 if people make their own choices, they might choose wrong. We have to
protect people from wrong choices.
99 geraniums are planted near the hall of open records.
99 TOUCHING—it is extremely rude for one citizen to touch another outside
of family units.
102 ELDERS—when adults became elders, their lives became different. They
were no longer needed by family units. Parents would go live with the
Childless Adults
103 Life consists of the things you do each day. There isn't anything else,
really.
105 The Committee can listen to anyone at anytime.
106 bridge is only crossed for official business or school trips. The land
beyond is flat and ordered, with fields for agriculture.
106 there are outlying communities—this is NOT the whole world. Just a
secluded piece.
107 land doesn't end after those nearby communities. No one goes past them.
109 Relief-of-Pain (MEDICATION)—provided for bruises, wounds, smashed
fingers, stomachache, skinned knee. Ointment, pill, or if severe an
injection. Instant Relief.
110 Community has never known pain.
111 Warfare is an unknown concept.
112 They don't want to hear about pain.
113 Everyone would be burdened and pained. They don't want that. That's the
real reason the Receiver is so vital to them, and so honored. The selected
Receiver to lift that burden from themselves.
113 Nothing could be changed.
114 It's rare that a newchild's status is as uncertain as Gabe's.
114 TWINS—Nurturer assigned to release the smaller of the two (weight).
121 wanted to quit assignment—the choice was not his.
123 ELDERS—did not ever leave their special place, the House of the Old,
where they were so well cared for and respected.
124 Hall of Open Records—age, parents' parents, assignments, releases
124 As long as adults are still working and contribution to the community,
they'll go and live with the other Childless Adults. And they won't be part
of their child's life anymore. And after that, they'll go to the House of the
Old and be will cared for and respected. They'll be released and there will
be a celebration.
126 FIRE—fireplaces, and candles are outlawed. They're dangerous.
127 LOVE—a generalized word, so meaningless it became almost obsolete.
The community can't function smoothly if people don't use precise
language.
130 SPEAKER—"today is declared an unscheduled holiday" happens very
rarely. Adults exempted from day's work, children from school and

training and volunteer hours. Substitute laborers took over all the necessary tasks: nurturing, food delivery, care of the old. The usual rules of order (ie. parking bicycles) could be disregarded.

131 Sameness is a world of no feeling.

133 RECREATION GAME—good guys/bad guys. Harmless pastime that used up energy. A disguised game of war.

135 he loved his friends and family, but without the memories, they couldn't love him back. He couldn't give them that so he couldn't change anything.

136 Newchildren learning to walk—celebration, but also introduction of discipline wand.

137 Storyteller—hasn't been assigned to anyone in a long time.

139 RECEIVER—terribly difficult and lonely life, despite the honor.

143 rule of no release added because last Receiver applied for release.

144 the memories came back to the people. Memories would not be lost with the Receiver. Memories are forever.

144 Community was overwhelmed with Feelings never experienced before.

146 children are never allowed to watch Releases.

147 RECEIVER—access to everything in the community. No one can say no.

147 all private ceremonies are recorded in the Hall of Closed Records

147 Newchild Twin Release—small windowless room, except for a bed, table w/ equipment, a scale, and a cupboard. Nurturers weigh each newborn. Fill a syringe and inject the needle into the top of the newchilds forehead until the syringe is empty. Child is still. Tidies up the room. Places child in a small carton, opens a small door (that looks like their trash chutes at school) and shoves the carton in.

152 no one must hear Jonas cry.

153 People know nothing. It's they way they live. The life that was created for them. They do what they're told to do, they know nothing else. Release is always like that. Feelings are not part of the life they've learned.

154 memories need to be shared.

155 ELDERS—wear long robes.

155 Jonas and Giver form plan—if it fails, he will be killed. If he stays, his life is not worth living.

155 the community has depended on the Receiver for generations.

155 If Jonas gets to Elsewhere, it will mean that the community has to bear the burden themselves, of the memories you had been holding for them.

156 they can handle it, but it will be desperately hard for them.

156 Giver will stay behind to help the community. They'd be thrown into chaos, they'd destroy themselves.

158 They were sure he could find the Elsewhere that existed. It would be a difficult journey

158 violation of a MAJOR RULE—for any citizen not on official business to leave a dwelling at night.

158 MIDNITE—collection crew done, path maintenance hasn't started yet.

158 Receiver wont be questioned very forcefully at night. He can do anything.

159 no nighttime attendant at the Annex

159 Parents won't call attention to RUDENESS because it reflects on
parenting.
160 VECHILES— and drivers could be ordered through the Speaker
160 interrupting the Ceremony would be Unthinkable.
161 Giver would announce Jonas was lost in the river, community would
murmur his name. attention would turn to bearing memories themselves.
163 Jonas fled. Every minute must take him father from the Community.
164 Gabe will be released bc he's too much for the Night Crew to handle.
165 Life where nothing was ever unexpected. Or inconvenient. Or unusual.
The life without color, pain, or past.
165 ROBBING the community of food—a serious transgression.
166 Only parents have seats on the back of bicycles.
166 no time to receive memories of strength and courage, could only rely on
what he had.
166 distances between communities widened with distance from Sameness.
167 Isolated place—fields on either side, trees, a stream, bumpy meadow.
167 not safe to travel in daylight. They would be looking for him soon.
167 slept through the first day.
168 days passed, he lost track of how many. Journey was automatic—sleep by
day, endless miles by night.
168 search planes most terrifying. They couldn't see color, so they used heat
seeking devices.
169 farther from community, slowly shed memories and leave them behind.
169 no signs of human habitation ahead.
169 frequency of planes— No longer hopeful, haphazard, eventually stopped.
170 Road became narrower, no longer tended to.
171 saw a waterfall and wildlife. Saw a bird, deer, chipmunk/squirrel (?),
wildflowers
171 after a life of Sameness and predictability, he was awed by the surprised
that lay beyond each curve of the road.
171 fear of starvation.
172 almost impossible to find food, always hungry. Fish, berries. Tortured by
hunger. Tried to use memories.
172 “you will never be starving” now he was.
173 he made the wrong choice and now he was starving. If he stayed, he'd
have starved other ways. There really was no choice.
173 saw Hills. It rained for 2 days. He'd never seen rain.
174 saw and heard nothing, still certain he was approaching his destination.
175 recognized snow. And steep hill. Made biking impossible
176 memories left and returned to the people.
177 there was no purpose in only-ifs
177 remembered happy times and the giver. It would not be uphill anymore.
177 finally found a memory he didn't have to give back—one of his own.
178 Finds ELSEWHERE and CHRISTMAS—there is a past present and
future, people keep their memories and celebrated love. They were waiting
for them. He heard people singing and discovered music.

MEMORIES

Page	Memories Given to Jonas
80	Snow; sled; hill
84	Sunshine
86	Sunburn
93	revisited Sled—it's red!
96	Rainbow
100	Guns; men with dark skin; kill an elephant and take its tusks; blood; another elephant mourns over the first
108	broken leg from a sledding accident; leg felt like fire
110	ended each day with a pleasant memory
110	sailboat sailing on a blue green lake
110	a meadow dotted with yellow wildflowers
110	an orange sunset behind mountains
110	neglected and unfed child
118	warfare and death of a fellow soldier
121	birthday parties; the joy of being an individual
121	museum visits
122	horseback riding
122	a walk through the woods; campfire
122	Christmas; warmth/happiness/family; grandparents; fireplace; LOVE

Page	Memories Given to Gabriel
116	sailboat sailing on a blue green lake
128	picnics in the sun
128	soft rainfalls against window panes
128	dancing barefoot on a damp lawn
166	a slow-swinging hammock under palm trees on a beach at night
167	a deep contented exhaustion
169	snow
172	banquets with huge roasted meats
172	birthday cake with frosting
172	fresh fruit picked and eaten
176	sunshine

BUILDINGS IN THE COMMUNITY

Bike ports
Dwellings
Childcare Center
Central Plaza
Auditorium
Nurturing Center
Food Distribution
House of the Old
Hall of Open Records
Hall of Closed Records
Department of Justice
The Annex
Recreation Area
Rehabilitation Center
Department of Bicycle Repair
House of Childless Adults
A bridge that is only crossed on official business.
(All buildings have attendants at the entrances)

ASSIGNMENT OPTIONS

Birth Mother / Laborer
Caretaker of the Old
Chief Elder
Director of Recreation
Doctor
Engineer
Fish Hatchery Attendant
Food Collection Crew
Food Delivery Crew
Food Production
Gardening Crew
Instructors (ages Three through Eleven)
Laborer
Landscape Workers
Law and Justice
Maintenance Crew
Nurturer / Night-Crew Nurturer
Path-Maintenance Crew
Pilot / Search Pilot
Receiver
Rehabilitation Director
Sanitation Laborer
Security Guard
Speaker
Street Cleaner
Storyteller
Swimming Instructor
Substitute Laborers
Vehicle Driver
*Committee of Elders
*Planning Committee

CHARACTER NAMES

Andrei—French; Valiant, Courageous
Asher (Ash)—Hebrew; Blessed, Happy
Benjamin—Hebrew; Son of My Right Hand
Bruno—German; Brown One
Caleb—Hebrew; Faithful
Fiona—Celtic/Gaelic; White, Fair
Fritz—German; Peaceful Ruler
Harriet—German; Home Ruler
Edna—Hebrew; Spirit Renewed
Gabriel (Gabe)—Hebrew; Hero of God
Inger—Danish; Daughter of a Hero
Isaac—Hebrew; He Will Laugh
Jonas—Hebrew; Accomplishing
Jonathan—Hebrew; Gift of God
Katya—Russian; Purity
Larissa—Greek; Cheerful
Lily—Latin; Blossoming Flower
Madeline—Greek; High Tower
Natasha—Greek; Rebirth
Phillipa—Greek; Lover of Horses
Pierre—French; A Rock
Roberto—Spanish; Bright Fame
Rosemary—English; Bitter Rose
Tanya—Slavic; Fairy Queen
Yoshiko—Japanese; Good Child
Mother
Father

PRECISION OF LANGUAGE

Assignment	Job
Assignment Group	People with the same assignment
Bikeport	Bike Rack
Comfort Object	Stuffed Animal
Dream Telling	A morning ritual everyone must participate in
Dwelling	House
Evening Meal	Dinner
Family Unit	Mother; Father; One Son; One Daughter
Groupmates	The fifty children that received families in the same year
Holiday	A day off of work
Loss	Accidental death that is mourned for one day
Midday Meal	Lunch
Morning Meal	Breakfast
Nightclothes	Pajamas
Play Area	Playground
Schoolwork	Homework
Sharing of Feelings	An evening ritual, everyone must participate
Stirrings	Sexual feelings towards another person
Newchild	Baby
Release	Preplanned death that is celebrated
Sleepingroom	Bedroom

THE CHARACTERS

Page	Character:
	Jonas
3	careful about language
4	apprehensive about ceremony
7	not interested in being a Nurturer
13	likes his sister's name
18	comfort object—Bear
20	doesn't like people mentioning his eyes. Pale eyes. Feels self-conscious.
23	bewildered by the apple incident but let it pass. Tried to forget about it.
26	didn't like to volunteer with friends b/c they fooled around
29	chose to spread out his hours so he could experience the differences
30	doesn't understand why nakedness is a bad thing.
34	rarely dreams
35	Stirrings towards Fiona, he feels confused and embarrassed
37	felt proud to be taking pills like other adults
37	guilty, but wanted to keep the feelings of stirrings; he liked it.
44	sat politely, but was increasingly bored each year at Ceremony
48	didn't understand how someone would ever 'not fit in'
48	trusts the Committee to make the right Assignments and decisions.
50	slightly more mature than many of his goupmates.
56	more and more apprehensive as his assignment approached.
57	calm when his turn came; then dizzy and only dimly aware
57	embarrassed; wanted to disappear; to not exist; blamed himself
59	applauded automatically and meaninglessly
59	humiliation and terror
60	didn't understand "selected"
61	listened to Assignment with increasing unease
62	a top student among his school days
62	presented himself promptly for chastisement of minor transgressions
62	has never felt pain before
63	has the capacity to See Beyond
63	desperate and wanted to explain he was not the right one for the job
64	felt a tiny silver of sureness for the first time.
64	his heart swelled with gratitude and pride...and fear of the unknown
65	felt different for the first time; felt the apartness
69	stunned that there was no more recreation time
69	certain he would never be rude, even if he was allowed
69	asking an intimate question/noticing a difference was too unnerving
69	wasn't ready to think about being able to lie—always trained not to.
71	had never been tempted to lie (but sometimes says he didn't dream)
71	terrified that all adults were allowed to lie.
74	had only ever seen 3 books, couldn't even imagine what was in the others
77	can't grasp the concept of "the whole world"
78	concerned, confused, awed at the Giver's power in the community

80 afraid he'd disgrace himself by falling asleep during 1st memory.
83 eager for whatever experience would come next
83 suddenly had so many questions.
84 began to fall into the memories quicker
85 believes he's brave
86 cheerfully obeys Giver
88 not ready to lie, not willing to tell the truth
88 felt like he needed to reach something in the distance; he did not know
how to get there
89 very aware of not being able to discuss his training
89 easy for him to be still and listen
91 frustrated by his inability to grasp and describe "color"
93 puzzled; delighted; grinning;
93 dumbfounded by color that wasn't fleeting. It just was.
95 wishes language was more precise
97 begins to see and know names of color in everyday life
99 often angry; irrationally angry with his groupmates' satisfaction in life
99 angry with himself that he couldn't change them. He tried.
100 weighted with new knowledge
102 still hadn't opened any of the books.
103 frightened at the thought of advising the Committee
105 feels comfortable with Rudeness now
106 worried and disappointed when sent away without training
106 tested his own memory by trying to hold onto colors
106 wondered what lay beyond the bridge
107 fearfully asks for more pain
110 realization that Community has never felt pain made him feel lonely
110 training always included pain now
115 sleeps so soundly
116 accidentally gave Gabriel sailing memory
116 nervous about what just happened
117 that he had this power frightened him; he decided not to tell
120 overwhelmed by pain
121 didn't want the memories; the honor; the wisdom; the pain; just childhood
121 understood the joy of being an individual; special, unique, proud
123 learned to treasure happiness, warmth, family, love
124 never thought about the past—parents' parents, etc.
125 I didn't realize there was any other way, until that memory
125 Love—a word and concept new to him
126 I like the feeling of love
126 still nervous the Speaker was listening
127 embarrassed to ask if parents love him
127 had never felt anything more meaningful than love
128 liked having Gabriel; gave him memories every night
129 stops taking his pills for Stirrings. Learned not to from the memories.
130 school is less important to him now

130 felt guilty about not taking pills
131 his feelings had more depth now
132 understood anger and sadness were deeper than a calm conversation
133 recognizes recreation game as a game of war
134 struggles not to cry and wont play along
135 sense of security slipping away
135 overwhelmed with loss and sadness
135 felt love for Asher and Fiona, they couldn't feel it back.
150 recognizes "release"; odd, shocked feeling. Stunned; numb
151 cries for the first time
152 sobbing, weeping, shuddering, pounding, shouting
152 mimics a cruel sarcastic voice
152 rocks his body back and forth
154 nasty, sarcastic
156 needed to care about the Community; it was the meaning of everything
157 heartbroken at the giver's loss of seeing colors
157 cheerfully greets parents and easily lies to them.
163 no fear, no regret at leaving the community behind
163 deep sadness at leaving the Giver behind. His closet friend.
166 saves Gabriel and takes him with
166 transmits the most soothing memories he has
166 didn't have time for more memories; had to rely on what he has
167 exhausted, achy, numb
168 had enough strength, but would have liked more courage
169 a little weaker; constantly vigilant
171 Gabe's safety depended on his continued strength
171 simple moments of exquisite happiness
171 fear of starvation
173 afraid he couldn't save Gabe. No longer cared about himself
174 hope diminished further
175 thought how easy it would be to give up—kept going.
176 a passionate urge to share the warmth with the person he loved
177 memories of joy flooded through him
178 somewhere ahead he knew there was warmth and light
178 found strength and special knowledge; heart full of hope
178 aware with certainty and joy
179 heard music for the first time; ahead of him, and behind him.

Giver

14 had never been seen; someone of such importance lived and worked alone.
61 sat with the Committee but seemed separate from them.
61 Jonas had never seen him before, bearded man with pale eyes.
75 thoughtful, silent, wrinkled, tired eyes
75 look that combines interest, curiosity, concern, sympathy.
76 looks older than he really is
79 has the power to turn the speaker OFF

79 moves with surprising quickness
83 has a whole world of sledding memories—very distant memories though
87 after training—looked drained and a little sad
87 moved as thought to ease away an aching sensation; terribly weary.
91 seems more energetic; slightly renewed; smiling
95 sees color all the time
102 encourages all of Jonas' questions.
102 not permitted to share books with his spouse was the most frustrating rule
105 an oddly harsh smile
105 sometimes send Jonas away without training
106 hunched over; rocking his body slightly; his face pale
113 never been able to think of a way to change the community
118 face contorted with suffering
120 couldn't bear to see what he had done to Jonas
121 was very gentle to Jonas in the days that followed "war"
122 favorite memory: Christmas with a Family
139 thinks about release when he's in a lot of pain; but not allowed to apply
141 loves Jonas and rosemary
142 couldn't bring himself to inflict physical pain on Rosemary
144 so devastated by Rosemary's release; didn't help the community
145 troubled eyes; his thoughts were elsewhere
146 wishes they wouldn't release twins
149 strange voice when watching release
151 watched Rosemary's release numb and helplessly
153 empowered to lie. Has never lied to Jonas
154 rueful, anguished, empty laugh
154 worst part of holding memories is the loneliness. They need to be shared.
154 having Jonas around helps him realize that there must be change
157 can no longer see colors
157 could Hear-Beyond—heard music
160 his responsibilities extend over all the surrounding areas
160 usually doesn't attend the Ceremony
161 work will be finished when helps the community to become whole
162 first time he looks truly happy—he wants to be with Rosemary when the
change is finished

Gabriel

20 pale eyes
21 comfort object-- hippo
42 granted an additional year of nurturing
42 wasn't at the right weight yet; didn't sleep well enough at night.
113 remained fretful at night; needing frequent attention
115 slept soundly for the 1st part of the night; then got restless
116 began to whimper
116 fell asleep when memories were transmitted
127 growing rapidly; crawling and giggling

128 when away from Jonas—started crying during the night again
128 Nurturer's still optimistic about his future
136 began to walk
164 is scheduled for release
169 recognizes planes overhead
173 cries out of hunger, cold, weak
174 hunched, shivering

Asher

3 Talk fast; mix things up; scrambled phrases 'til unrecognizable & funny
17 fun; doesn't have any serious interests, makes a game out of everything
17 never cried as a newchild; giggled and laughed at everything
24 hand-eye coordination was not up to standards. Required to play catch.
27 careless about parking his bike
43 Phillipa is 10 years younger than Asher
54 sheepish, but pleased at the special attention
55 talked too fast and mixed up words as a toddler
55 at one point stopped talking altogether
55 cheerful disposition was well known throughout the community
55 fewer language lapses and apologies are very prompt.
55 his good humor is unfailing
65 hesitant and uncertain around Jonas after Ceremony
134 irritated with Jonas

Lily

5 wiggling with impatience
7 feelings were always straightforward, fairly simple, easy to resolve
8 tries to look innocent
10 obedient
13 one of father's favorites in the nurturing center
18 impatient
18 comfort object—Elephant
22 was never quiet
23 hair-ribbons undone and dangling.
34 Dream—afraid of being caught breaking rules (riding a bike)
40 impatient
45 seemed attentive, but was looking longingly at the bikes
66 sucks her thumb
101 skeptical; indifferent
135 merrily playing with friends

Chief Elder

51 is a woman
57 makes no mistakes. Especially not at the Ceremony
59 vibrant, gracious voice; her voice flowed over the crowd
60 touches Jonas' shoulder

Father

13 a shy and quiet man
34 didn't dream
48 calmer disposition than mother
114 doesn't mind getting up at night.
114 next on the list for newchild release
146 gentle
148 uses a special [baby] voice with newchildren
157 smiles and lies easily about newchild release
159 would be irritated but not alarmed; would think Jonas inconsiderate
159 will grow angry, but not call attention to it b/c that would be rude
164 voted for Gabriel's release

Mother

9 frustrated/angry/guilty she couldn't make a difference in criminal's life
34 dream—afraid of not understanding the rules.
48 higher intelligence than father
114 in favor of Gabriel's release; not sleeping at night is hard on her
159 would be irritated but not alarmed; would think Jonas inconsiderate
159 will grow angry, but not call attention to it b/c that would be rude

Fiona

28 good student, quiet and polite. But she had a sense of fun as well.
43 Bruno is 11 years younger, rare for parents to wait that long in between.
43 doesn't like the name "Bruno"
52 good Caretaker
56 calm, quiet, serene, sensitive, gentle
56 satisfied and pleased with her assignment—Caretaker of the Old
89 accepts apologies automatically
135 so lovely

Rosemary

104 had applied for release; it wasn't in her rules not to
104 the memories she had were sent back to the community and the people
140 her name is never to be spoken or used again in the community
141 was given only happy memories
142 was like Jonas, wanted to experience everything
144 applied for release after only 5 weeks
151 preferred to inject herself at Release
162 the Giver's daughter

Larissa

30 relaxed, peaceful expression of trust on her face,
30 looks unprotected, exposed, free
31 happy; mischievous look; sense of humor

The Next Step

Now that the script is in good shape, the next step would be to acquire permission to produce the play in the future. Currently, I have not been in contact with either Ms. Lowry or her publishing company, Dell Laurel-Leaf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books a division of Random House, Inc. in New York City. Receiving permission to adapt the book prior to beginning the project was unnecessary due to its educational purpose. However, if I have any intent of taking this piece farther, legal permission is essential. The sources I would need to contact are below:

The Publisher

Houghton Mifflin Trade and Reference Division
Adult and Children's Trade Permissions
215 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003

Houghton Mifflin Company
Permissions Department
215 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003

Fax: 212-420-5899

E-mail: trade_permissions@hmco.com

Requests must be made in writing and may be mailed or faxed. Please state specifically the title and author (and copyright year or edition number, if possible) of the book you are planning to reference, and be as specific as possible regarding the intended use of materials (<http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/faq/>).

The Author

Lois Lowry
info@loislowry.com

I would need to submit my script along with my intentions to produce the play. Including a specific venue and possible dates of performances would help as well. The more information I can provide to the publishing house, the more willing they will be to grant permission to the project.